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GRIFFITH JOHN

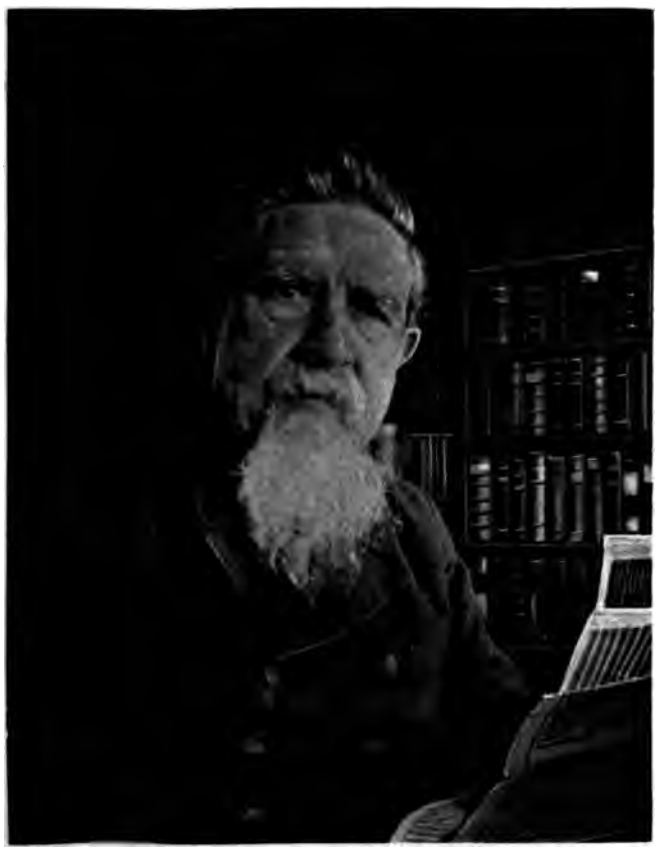
THE STORY OF FIFTY YEARS IN CHINA *by* R. WARDLAW THOMPSON



c John Griffith

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Yours very sincerely
Gerhardt Adam



Next



Reserved

DEC 27



GRIFFITH JOHN

THE STORY OF FIFTY YEARS IN CHINA



GRIFFITH JOHN

THE STORY OF FIFTY YEARS IN CHINA

BY

R. WARDLAW THOMPSON

FOREIGN SECRETARY OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY

WITH TWO PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAITS AND SIXTEEN OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

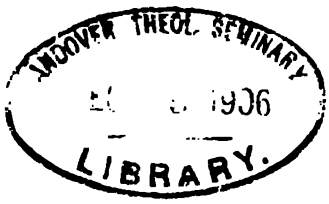
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PREFACE

WHEN I was asked in the early summer of last year to take up the work which had been commenced by my dear friend Richard Lovett, I think those who made the request had little idea of what they were expecting of me. Certainly I had no idea of the magnitude of the task, or I should not have ventured to add it to the already somewhat exacting duties of my office. Mr. Lovett had, by the aid of Dr. John and other friends, accumulated a great mass of material, and had actually begun to write the life. It was, in fact, the last work he was engaged upon until a late hour of the night preceding his very sudden removal. It was thought that I should simply have to complete, to the best of my ability, the work already well begun. My affection for Mr. Lovett, my intense admiration for Dr. John, and my deep sense of the importance of having the story of mission work in Central China presented to the public at the present crisis, combined to induce me to accept the honour of being trusted to undertake this task.

I speedily found, however, that, great as had been the mass of material accumulated, it did not represent

half of what had to be read and digested. The whole of Dr. John's voluminous correspondence with the London Missionary Society from 1861 onwards had not yet been touched, and though Mr. Lovett had prepared a first rough draft of the first three chapters, there were no notes or memoranda which would give me any clue to the course he had intended to take with the remainder of the long and interesting history. I found it necessary, therefore, and, with the consent of the Secretaries of the Religious Tract Society, I determined, to begin *de novo* and to deal with the story of the life in my own way.

No reader of the book can possibly regret more than I do the loss of the matured judgment and the literary skill of the author of the Lives of James Gilmour and James Chalmers. The subject is one which would well have repaid the employment of his highest powers. God has called him to other service, and we can only be thankful for what he was permitted to do for the missionary cause while here by the vivid and striking pictures he gave the Church of two great missionary heroes. Yet one could have wished that the story of the beginnings of missionary work in Central China, which is bound up with the life of Griffith John, could have come from his practised pen. This cannot be, and so the book goes forth as the production of one whose chief qualifications are some previous knowledge of the subject of Missions in China, and a high admira-

tion for the great missionary whose career and labours he has endeavoured to describe.

Griffith John has one virtue which is not always conspicuous in great preachers and other prominent persons. He is most prompt in answering letters, and counts no trouble too great in giving information and explanation. At the same time I am bound to confess that caligraphy is not one of his special gifts. The perusal, mostly at night, of hundreds of pages of MSS. written on foreign paper, and every page crowded as closely as ingenuity could devise with writing which it has not always been easy to read, has been the one outstanding trouble of my task. But my interest in the man and his work has grown and deepened despite this human frailty in my hero. He had a very high place in my regard before; he has grown upon me to the end. Above all, I have been impressed by his amazing and tireless industry and thoroughness, his magnificent optimism, and the magnetism of his faith and enthusiasm. I thought I knew something before of the character, the extent, and the urgency of mission work in Central China. I end my task with a new vision of its greatness, its pressing need, and above all its wonderful promise and hopefulness. If I shall have succeeded to any extent in conveying the impressions I have received to the minds of my readers, I shall be richly rewarded for my toil.

R. WARDLAW THOMPSON.

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GRIFFITH JOHN AND HIS FAMILY, 1906.

From a photograph taken in the United States. The only absentee being Gito Sparham.

GRIFFITH JOHN

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE AND TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY

THE life of a great missionary, who has spent many years and endured many perils in the prosecution of his great enterprise, who has become known and honoured in many circles beyond the Society with which he is most immediately connected, whose voice has been listened to and whose judgment has been respected by native leaders and British officials, cannot fail to present abundant material for interesting and profitable study. The story of his work, the expression of his opinions, the observation of his character, and the principles which have ruled his life are all of value.

To this has to be added, in the case of Griffith John, all the interest arising from the fact that he has spent the past fifty years in China. About the beginning of that period a great English poet wrote—

> Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

The fifty years which have elapsed since that line

was penned have in 'far Cathay' been crowded with events of most momentous significance. A third of the human race have come out from the isolation of centuries, have begun to seek the fellowship and the help of the 'outer barbarian,' and from proud exclusiveness and unbending opposition to every foreign influence have changed to the manifestation of an eager desire to participate in everything that has given the Western nations their superiority in the world. It is one of the most remarkable revolutions in history, the full bearing of which upon the world's life and on the future of the West as well as the East can scarcely as yet be estimated. When the history of this period comes to be written in true perspective, and with power to note and rightly to estimate the various streams of tendency which have combined to bring about the change, it will be found that the introduction of the new moral and spiritual influences of Christianity, through the preaching of the Gospel, and, above all, through the wide dissemination of Christian literature among a reading people, has been one of the most powerful agencies in silently dissolving the old order and in setting free the mind and heart of China to start upon a new career of progressive life. The voice of the missionary has very largely assisted in China's awakening.

Dr. Griffith John has, as I have said, been a missionary influence in China for fifty years. During nearly the whole of that time he has been resident in one of the largest and most influential centres of Chinese life in the heart of the Empire. He early

gained a great command of the Chinese language, and has had an exceptional reputation as a preacher. His pen has been constantly and most effectively at work in the preparation of Christian literature for the people among whom he has laboured. He has gained the respect and the confidence of some of China's great and most progressive statesmen. The story of his life has therefore the exceptional interest of being closely interwoven with the history of China's awakening.

Dr. John has supplied for this volume the following sketch of his early years:—

'I was born at Swansea on December 14, 1831. My father was a foreman in the employ of Messrs. Vivian and Sons. He was a truly godly man, and highly respected by all who knew him for his uprightness, benevolence, and kindliness of heart. He was blessed with a strong constitution, and was equal to any amount of hard toil. He was noted for his tenacity of purpose. Whatsoever he undertook to do, he did with all his might, and never stopped till the work was done. As a father he was most affectionate to all his children. To myself, as the youngest and the only boy of the family, he was particularly so.

'My mother died of cholera in 1832, when I was only eight months old. The loss of my mother, at so early an age, I have always felt to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest, privation of my life. Aunt Mary, my father's sister, undertook the task of looking after me, and I owe her more than tongue could tell. She loved me with tenderest love, and strove in every

possible way to do a mother's part. But she was not my *mother*. Her face was not my mother's face, and that was the face I longed to see!

'From the cradle I was brought up in a religious atmosphere. All my relations on my father's side have for ages been known as eminent for their piety. Some of them were giants in stature, and still more so in spiritual attainments. I have even now very vivid recollections of the prayers offered up at the Saturday evening prayer meetings by Uncles David and Rees. How they used to pour out their souls before God! How they would wrestle with God! Each of them presented to my imagination a living picture of wrestling Jacob. All these godly men took the deepest interest in me. How much I owe to their prayers and loving counsel is known to God only. Then there was the Sunday School, with all its hallowed influences. In those days the Sunday School in Wales was a grand institution for imbuing the child's mind with Biblical knowledge and Christian principles. I seem to have been born and brought up in the House of God, and among God's people. It may be truly said of me, as it was said of Timothy, "And from a babe thou hast known the Holy Scriptures."

'When about eight years of age I became the subject of deep religious impressions. One Sunday morning, in Ebenezer Chapel, Swansea, I was sitting in the gallery, witnessing the Church celebrating the Lord's Supper. Whilst standing there, and watching the proceedings below, I saw my sister Mary walking up to the pulpit pew, to receive the right hand of

fellowship. Immediately a number of questions suggested themselves to my mind. Why does my sister desire to join the Church in this public manner? If it is her duty to do this, is it not my duty to do the same? If she is right in partaking of the Lord's Supper, am not I wrong in keeping aloof? Should I not consecrate my life to God as she is doing?

'These questions, once started, could not be silenced. They kept haunting me and demanding an answer. I spoke to one of the most prominent members of the Church. He encouraged me to persevere in my purpose, gave me some good advice, and promised to speak to the deacons. Among the deacons there were two leading men, Rees and Daniel. These two old men were thoroughly conscientious and good, but the very opposite of each other in their mental traits and disposition. Rees was all love, and very sympathetic; Daniel was stern, and disposed to treat every case brought before him very much as a lawyer might do. Rees took me into his arms at once, but Daniel stood aloof. Both, however, watched me carefully for some months, and at last gave it as their united opinion that the change in the little boy was genuine, and that he ought to be admitted into Church fellowship. I was accordingly admitted a member of the Church at Ebenezer when only eight years of age.

'There are those who might question the action of the Ebenezer deacons, but, looking back upon the event from my present standpoint, I do not hesitate to say that it is my sincere conviction that they were divinely led in their decision. It is true that my

knowledge was very limited, and my experience was that of a child, yet I knew that I was a sinner and that Jesus was my Saviour. I loved God, believed in Christ, and desired to live the best and highest life. I knew enough to be saved, and this being the case, it is difficult to see why a place among God's people should be denied me on account of my youthfulness.

'The fact of my being a recognised member of the Church did much in after days towards keeping me from falling into temptation and sin. My Church membership kept me in vital contact with the best and wisest men in Swansea, and secured for me their daily help in my efforts to conquer evil and grow in knowledge and goodness. Had I not taken the momentous step when I did, it is possible that I might never have taken it. Would I have been a missionary to-day? I cannot say. Possibly not.

'There was at the time a mothers' prayer meeting held weekly at Ebenezer Chapel, of which my aunt was a member. It was confined strictly to women, but an exception was made in favour of *Gito bach* (little Gito), the name by which I generally went in those days. The first prayer I ever offered up in public was at one of these meetings, soon after my admission into the Church. This first attempt was to me a very trying failure. I managed to get out one sentence, and then came utter blankness and a complete break-down. Not another word could I command, and I felt as if I might sink into the ground. But the dear old ladies were equal to the occasion. They all came around me, spoke appreciatively of that one sentence,

reminded me that some of them had passed through a similar experience, and assured me that I would do better the next time. The next time soon came, and I did much better. I went on attending the meetings and taking a part in them. Under the loving care of the mothers, I made considerable progress in knowledge and Christian experience. All of them seemed to have the warmest affection for me, and my spiritual interests were to every one of them a matter of personal concern. It is impossible to say how much I owe to the prayers, the sympathy, and the watchful care of those godly women.

'About this time a Mr. William Rees, of Nantyglo, came to reside at Swansea. He was not only a godly man, but a very able man in many ways. His knowledge of the Scriptures was remarkable, and on most matters he was a well-informed man. He had also the knack of teaching in a very high degree. Mr. Rees took a great liking to me, and he became my hero for the time. Among those who took a prominent part in the affairs of the Church generally, and in the Sunday School in particular, he stood first and foremost. He was asked to take charge of a class in the Sunday School, and I had the great privilege of being one of his pupils, a privilege for which I have never ceased to be most sincerely thankful. He taught me to *think*, and was the first who ever tried to do so. He put me in the way of taking down the heads of sermons, a habit which I kept up for years.

'Mr. Rees also encouraged me to commit large portions of the Scriptures to memory. During the

three years I was under his influence, I must have committed a large portion of the Psalms, as well as the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and the greater part of the New Testament, to memory. My cousin, the late Rev. David John, Booth Street, Manchester, had a more retentive memory than I had, and he went beyond me in this line of things. The Rev. Thomas Davies, one of the famous preachers of Wales, was our minister at the time. Instead of reading the Scriptures himself, he would often ask me to recite a psalm, or a chapter, or both. This I used to do from the gallery, at a point directly opposite to the pulpit. The recitation took place generally at the evening service, when the large chapel was simply crammed with men, women, and children. I must have repeated scores of chapters from that gallery; and I have even now a very vivid recollection of the impression made on my own mind as well as on the minds of others on some of those occasions. To me it was a most stimulating and inspiring exercise.

'When twelve years old, Mr. Rees procured for me a situation at Onllwyn, a place distant from Swansea about twenty miles. His friend, Mr. John Williams, was the owner of extensive iron and coal mines, smelting furnaces, and a large store, at which the employees were supplied with all the necessaries of life, in the shape of grocery, drapery, ironmongery, etc. It was in this store that I spent the next four or five years of my life. Mr. Williams was a godly man, and Mrs. Williams was a godly woman. They took the deepest interest in the spiritual welfare of the

employees, and did all in their power to promote it. They treated me with marked kindness from the beginning, and made me feel that I was regarded by them more as a son than a servant.

'It was at Onllwyn that I began to preach. My first sermon was delivered at a prayer meeting held in a private house, when I was only fourteen years old. But I was soon made to feel that I had made a mistake. I felt that I was too young and too inexperienced for the work, and that it would be better to spend some years more in reading and thinking before committing myself finally to the work of the ministry. When sixteen years of age, I was induced to begin again; and from that time till now I have been a preacher of the Gospel. My first sermon was preached at Onllwyn, and my text was Romans i. 18, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." The invitation to supply pulpits became numerous, and I soon got to be known in that part of South Wales as the *boy preacher*. I passed through many experiences in those days—some pleasant and some trying. I may give the following as an illustration:—

'A lay preacher at Alltwen used to supply the Onllwyn pulpit one Sunday in every month. He and I became great friends, and he pressed me hard to go and preach at Alltwen. I, after a good deal of persuasion, consented, and the Sunday was fixed upon. I arrived at Alltwen about half-an-hour before the time, and found the elders and deacons all assembled in the caretaker's house in the immediate vicinity of the chapel. When I announced myself as Griffith

John, they looked amazed, and did not attempt to conceal their disappointment. When they beheld that short, slender figure before them, and looked at his skull cap, unconventional jacket, and unclerical cravat, they must have felt that a practical joke had been perpetrated upon them. They soon made up their minds that they could not ask me to preach, and that some other arrangements must be made for the evening service. But what was to be done? It was almost time to begin, and too late to send for another to occupy the pulpit. They gave me a seat in the corner of the room, and left me severely alone.

'Fortunately for them and myself, a well-known preacher made his appearance, and brought instant relief. He had been occupying one of the neighbouring pulpits, and was now on his way home. He thought he would turn in and enjoy the evening service at Alltwen. It was interesting to notice the instant change which the advent of my friend brought with it. They assured him that he was a perfect God-send to them, and that he must preach. He replied that he did not come there to preach, but to hear Griffith John, and that Griffith John must preach. "That will never do," said the deacons. "You must preach; let Griffith John, if you wish it, open the service for you." After some further wrangling, I got up and said that I had resolved not to preach, but that I was quite willing to take the preliminary part of the service, as was suggested by the deacons. My friend was sincerely sorry, but he felt he must comply.

'I ascended the pulpit feeling sore at heart, and



cried to God for strength. I read Romans viii., gave out a hymn, and prayed. Long before the close of the prayer, all hearts were greatly moved, and the place had become a veritable Bethel. At the close, some of the deacons rushed up the pulpit stairs and begged me to go on. I refused, and said that I had done the work which they had given me to do. Then my friend the lay preacher came to meet me as I was walking down the stair, and besought me to go on, as he could not face the congregation if I declined to preach. I felt I must comply with the wishes of one who had shown so much kindness to me, so I turned back, gave out another hymn, and preached from Romans viii. 18. My soul was deeply moved, the vast audience caught the fire, and before the close of the sermon the whole congregation was on its feet, shouting "Glory" and "Amen." My friend the lay preacher followed, but the *hwyl* had spent itself, and he brought his sermon to a speedy close. After this the deacons were all delightfully polite and cordial. They put an extra piece of silver in my hands for my sermon, and made me promise that I would allow my name to be put down on the list of their regular supplies. That scene is still very vivid in my mind. But it is only one of many. I had some strange experiences as a boy preacher.

'I felt at length that it was high time for me to enter on a course of study with the view of preparing myself for college. I mentioned my intentions to Mr. Williams. He listened attentively and sympathetically, but expressed a hope that I would not

leave him for a time at least. He told me also that it had been his intention to make me chief manager of the store, and would do so at once if I would promise to remain. I told him that my mind was fully made up, and that nothing in the shape of worldly prospects could have any weight with me. When he saw how matters stood, he offered no further opposition. He gave me his heartiest parting blessing. To the day of his death he followed my career with the deepest interest.

'Others, and among them there were some ministers, did their very best to turn me aside from my purpose. In those days there was in Wales a strong prejudice against the colleges. They were looked upon as places to spoil a man of any promise. "You have the gift of speech, you have a musical voice, you can move the Welsh hearts. What do you want to go to college for? Let the dry sticks go there. The college is no place for you and such men as you. It will only spoil you." I have a distinct recollection of one of the most influential ministers in Wales speaking to me just in that way. My mind, however, was fixed, so in the latter end of 1848 I left Onllwyn, feeling very thankful for all the kindness I had received there, and for the many precious experiences I had gathered there. The business habits acquired at Onllwyn have been of great value to me throughout my whole missionary life.

'In 1843 the Rev. Thomas Davies was succeeded by the Rev. Elijah Jacob as minister of the Church of Ebenezer, Swansea. Mr. Jacob had become deeply

interested in me for some time before I left Onllwyn. When he found that I had made up my mind to enter college, he undertook the task of putting me through a preparatory course of study, my father paying the fees. I commenced my studies with Mr. Jacob in November 1848. All went on well till August 11, 1849, when my dear father died of cholera, the disease to which my mother had succumbed in 1832. My father was taken ill in the morning, and died in the evening about ten o'clock.

'This was a dreadful blow to me. All my hopes and prospects were, to all appearance, blighted. I was entirely dependent on my father for everything, and for a moment it looked as if there were nothing left to me but to return to Onllwyn to commence business again. I cried unto the Lord in my distress, and He heard the voice of my prayer. At the very time I was turning over the problem before me my Uncle John and his wife sent me word to the effect that they were prepared to place two rooms at my disposal, one for a bedroom and one for a study, which I might regard as my own till I entered college. My sisters came forward and guaranteed my food, and Mr. Jacob said that he would prepare me for college gratuitously, and that I should never know the lack of an earthly father as long as he lived. All these promises were faithfully kept, and I went on with my studies.

'And here I should like to say a word about Mr. Jacob. One of the greatest fortunes of my life was to come into close contact with this truly noble man.

He was not one of the great preachers of Wales, but he was one of the best and most useful. As a pastor he greatly excelled, and was universally beloved. He was a man of stern principle and faultless integrity. A more devout, upright, earnest man I have never known. He was a man that would never move till he was thoroughly convinced of the justice of the cause, but, when once convinced, neither the powers of earth nor hell could hold him back. Goodness was the grand feature in his character—the feature which marked and adorned the man. He was also a true friend. I have never known a truer, and few as true. To me he was father, brother, friend; and the relationship between us, to the day of his death, was close, tender, and sacred. The principles which he instilled into my mind when a mere lad I have always regarded as among my chiefest possessions. I never think of Mr. Jacob without thanking God for giving me such a friend, and for the beautiful fellowship we had with one another for many years.'

Dr. John, in the autobiographical sketch from which we have already quoted, thus refers to the beginning of his college training:—

'I entered Brecon College in September 1850, and there I had for more than three years the advantages of the tuition of the Rev. David Davies, M.A., and Rev. Professor Henry Griffiths. Mr. Davies was our classical tutor: a very good, amiable man, but lacking in enthusiasm and stimulating power. The daily portion of food he laid before us was good and wholesome, but very insipid. He had not the gift of

making work likeable and attractive. In this respect he was the reverse of Professor Griffiths, who was at the time the Principal of the college. I had not been in the college a week before I began to feel the Professor's inspiring influence. His branches were theology, mathematics, science, and philosophy. In each and all these branches he seemed to be perfectly at home, and in each and all he was an able, energetic, and enthusiastic leader. To hear him lecture was to me a perfect treat, no matter what the subject might be. The driest subject became exquisite poetry in his hands, and the most forbidding became intensely attractive. He stirred my ambition as no other men had ever done, and during the three years I sat at his feet he managed to create within my breast a great thirst for knowledge. If Mr. Rees was the first to teach me to think, Mr. Griffiths was the first to open up the great fields of knowledge to my vision, and to inspire me with a longing to enter in and possess. It was a great privilege to come under the influence of such a man at such a time in my life.'

Brecon College, thus highly valued and gratefully remembered by Dr. John, has had a long and honourable history. Brecon is an important town nearly in the centre of the county of the same name. It is a busy, thriving place, with a life and character of its own. The college in which Griffith John became a student reached Brecon by a process of development. All through its history it has been largely maintained by an old charity now known as the Congregational Fund Board. This is an endowment that dates from

the year 1695, and has exerted ever since a powerful and beneficent influence upon the education of Nonconformist ministers.

In 1738 four students were sent by the Congregational Fund Board to Mr. Griffiths of Carnarvon. The academy, as such small institutions were then called, over which he presided, existed at Carnarvon until the year 1757, when it was transferred to Abergavenny. In 1782 it removed to Oswestry, and in 1791 to Wrexham. There it was under the supervision of the Rev. Jenkin Lewis from 1801 to 1811. Mr. Jenkin Lewis was succeeded by the Rev. George Lewis, who, when he removed to Llanfyllin to become pastor of the Church there, was allowed by the Board to carry the academy with him. In 1820 a minute runs: 'This Board is of opinion that it is advisable to remove the North Wales Academy from Llanfyllin to Newtown.' From 1830 to 1836 the academy passed through a series of troubles, which were at length successfully surmounted, and in 1839 it became a college, and was permanently located at Brecon. Henry Griffiths, to whom Griffith John looks back with such loving memory, was Principal of Brecon College from 1844 to 1853.

Like so many of the Free Church educational institutions that have gradually struggled up from weakness to strength and beneficent influence, Brecon has always been hampered for lack of sufficient resources, and has been able to accommodate only a small number of students. Nevertheless, in the course of its honourable history of nearly two centuries it has

sent forth many able and useful ministers. High on its roll stands the name of Griffith John.

Mr. Jacob, the inspiring force of Griffith John's early years, kept a diary in which such records as these are found:—'December 10, 1849. Was at Bethel. Heard G. John preach for the first time, and my opinion is that he will become one of the best of preachers.' 'June 10, 1850. We came to Brecon to the examination. G. John and three others were admitted.' 'September 9, 1850. This morning my dear friend and pupil, G. John, left for Brecon.'

CHAPTER II

THE GREAT DECISION AND THE OPEN DOOR

IT was comparatively early in his college training that the desire arose in the heart of Griffith John to become a missionary to the heathen. Here is his own description of this momentous resolution :—

'It was during my stay at Brecon when I began to think seriously of the missionary work and its claims. I entered college with two desires in my mind—a higher and a lower. The higher desire was to serve man and to glorify God ; the lower was the desire to become one of the great preachers of Wales. At that time, Thomas Rees, Thomas Thomas, Thomas Jones, and several more were at the height of their popularity. The eloquence of these men used to move my soul to its deepest depth, and I longed to take my place side by side with them. The higher desire was there all the time, and occupied, I hope, the highest place ; but the lower was there also, and occupying, I am bound to say, no mean place. When, however, the missionary desire came in and took full possession of my heart, the lower desire was driven out, and driven out never to return again. That was a great victory, one of the greatest victories ever won on the arena of my soul,

and one for which I have never ceased to feel truly thankful to God.

'Several attempts were made to dissuade me from offering myself to the London Missionary Society. Even Professor Griffiths was opposed to it at first. He had planned a university career for me, and was extremely anxious that I should follow it. For the first time he laid his scheme before me, and requested me to take a few weeks to reconsider, in the light of his proposal, my purpose of becoming a missionary. I did so, and at the close of the prescribed time I went to see him again and told him that my mind remained unchanged. He then encouraged me to persevere in my purpose, and assured me that he looked upon the missionary calling as the highest to which any man could devote his life. He told me also that he himself had at one time resolved to be a missionary, and that he had never ceased to regret the circumstances which led him to relinquish the idea.

'A large number of my ministerial friends were bitterly opposed to my taking this course. They believed in missions, but they could not see that it was God's will that I should be a missionary. They spoke of my special fitness for the ministry in Wales, and pointed to the offers which I had already received from several churches as a clear indication of God's will concerning me. They loved me sincerely and were extremely anxious to save me from taking a false step. I thanked them for all their kindness, but assured them that my purpose was fixed, and that I must obey the Divine voice. Gradually they became more reconciled

to the course on which I had resolved. When I left Wales for China, I did so richly laden with the heartiest good-will and best benedictions of all.'

The letter in which Griffith John informed the Directors of the London Missionary Society of his wish to become a missionary and offered himself as a candidate for service has been preserved, together with his 'Answers to Questions,' and the commendatory letter of President Griffiths. The confession of his faith is characteristically clear, decided, and evangelical, though it is not narrow or dogmatic. The following is the simple and straightforward letter in which he offered his services to the Society :—

'BRECON COLLEGE, *March* 18, '53.

'REVD. SIR,—I humbly beg leave, through you, to lay before the gentlemen of the Committee my most anxious desire to dedicate myself to the missionary work, and as such to offer my service to the London Missionary Society.

'I cannot state exactly when and where this desire first occurred to my mind ; as the propagation of the Gospel, the fulfilment of Christ's promise that His "Gospel" should be "preached in all the world," together with the deplorable condition of the heathen, have been some of the first subjects to which my attention has been directed, and with which my mind has always been deeply impressed. Though feeling a deep interest in the missionary cause for many years, as above stated, yet I did not think seriously of becoming a missionary myself until I had commenced

my collegiate career at Brecon, nearly three years ago. During this interval it has been to me a subject of serious deliberation and of anxious and frequent prayer. Ever since, this desire has been continually increasing, and has become more and more ardent, though I must confess I have many times, on different occasions, exerted my utmost to suppress and cool it.

'Thinking at length that it was high time to decide the question, I have, for the last two months, made it a subject of deeper consideration.

'Having, so far as it is in my power, examined myself in connection with this most important undertaking, I conscientiously believe and trust that the motives which thus induce me to dedicate myself to the missionary work are more pure and genuine than those that induce me to choose the home ministry.

'When I came to a determination, I laid the case before my tutors and others, who gave me every encouragement, and having had the permission of the Committee, I now beg leave to submit myself to be examined by you and the gentlemen of the Committee.

'Various reasons induce me to fix upon Madagascar as a suitable field of labour, though it is not for me to dictate as to the question of place; that I would wish Providence to determine.

'I have the honour, Rev. Sir, to be your humble servant, GRIFFITH JOHN.

'REV. E. PROUT.'

The student's grateful admiration of his Principal was reciprocated by him in affectionate appreciation of

his promising pupil. Principal Griffiths' letter to the Directors contains a very candid and discriminating account of three students who were offering their services to the Society. This is what he said of Griffith John :—

'*Griffith John* is at the head of his class. He is a strangely winning and affectionate little creature, overflowing with kindness and sociableness, and an universal favourite. He is beyond comparison the most popular preacher in Welsh we ever heard, and many and widespread are the regrets felt at the thought of his leaving the country. He speaks English well, always has his wits about him, full of sound common sense, singularly rich in inventiveness, very persevering, and altogether just the kind of person I should like to see sent to a place like Madagascar. In intellectual power he is far, very far above the average of young men, and I believe still more so in the fervour and steadiness of his piety. More than one church has expressed a wish to have him for a minister.'

Dr. John ends his reminiscences of this period of his life as follows :—

'It was in March 1853 that I offered my services to the London Missionary Society. Whilst my preference for Madagascar was very decided, I felt it to be my duty to leave the final decision with the Directors. I continued my studies at Brecon till January 1854, when I was removed to Bedford Academy. This step was taken at my own suggestion. It had occurred to me that it would be of great advantage to me in after life if I could spend some time in England for the purpose



of acquiring a greater facility in the English language, and enjoying the benefits of English society. I accordingly made known my views to the Directors. They thought the idea a good one, and at once granted my request.'

The Missionary Academy at Bedford, to which Griffith John went from Brecon College, was an interesting example of the transition stage in the views of the leaders in the missionary enterprise as to the intellectual equipment required for work among the heathen. At the time when the London Missionary Society was formed, the prevalent idea seemed to be that a theological training was not requisite for missionaries. It was deemed quite sufficient if they were earnest and devout and believed they were called of God to this service. The first missionaries were selected very largely under the influence of this idea.

There were, however, one or two men among the founders of the Society who had a clearer recognition of the requirements and responsibilities of the missionary's task. Among these was the Rev. Dr. Bogue, of Gosport, who very early urged the establishment of seminaries for the training of the candidates for missionary service. For two years the question was in debate, and its ultimate settlement in 1800 was greatly helped by the sad experience of the early and complete failure of a very large proportion of those who had been sent out to the South Seas. In 1800 the candidates for missionary service were placed under the care of Dr. Bogue, who already had an academy at Gosport for training men for the home ministry.

During the next twenty-nine years the majority of the missionaries who were sent out by the Society received their training from Dr. Bogue.

Though the necessity for special training for missionary service was thus recognised, it was not universally accepted for a long time. Dr. Bogue's biographer, the Rev. Dr. Bennett, wrote as follows: 'There have not ceased to be men of influence in the Society who sincerely think that the best education for missionaries is none at all; and the next best is that which consists in teaching them to make wheel-barrows and plant turnips, rendering them useful mechanics rather than good divines or preachers.'

As time went on, and the number of candidates for missionary service increased, other academies were opened for their training. Among these was that commenced at Bedford in 1847, and continued until 1867, in which a succession of men, whose names have become well known in connection with the work of the London Missionary Society in many fields, received their preparation for service.

Meanwhile the claims of foreign missions were becoming increasingly recognised among the students for the home ministry; and growing knowledge of the requirements of the mission-field made it increasingly clear that it was on every ground desirable that the missionary should go to his work with as thorough an intellectual equipment as could be obtained for the ministry at home. The Society therefore resolved henceforth to rely entirely upon the recognised theological colleges; and the special missionary seminaries

were given up when the Academy at Bedford was closed.

Griffith John, having had the benefit of a course of training at Brecon College, went to Bedford under somewhat different conditions from his fellow-students there, and only remained a few months, during which his way to the mission-field became gradually cleared. He writes:—

'I was received very kindly by Mr. Jukes and Mr. Alliot, under whom I was to continue my studies for the next year or so. I made a host of friends at Bedford. Though fresh from Wales, I felt quite at home in the midst of my new surroundings. My missionary fellow-students were Dennis, Lea, and Duthie. We became fast friends and spent much time together. Of the four, Duthie and myself alone remain. I remember well the day on which he arrived at Bedford. We fell in love with each other at once. We have seen each other only once since we left Bedford; but the love which sprang up between us at our first meeting is still burning, and will burn on for evermore.'[1]

Griffith John's attraction towards Madagascar and strong desire to find his work there are easily accounted for. The great African island was at that period especially the land of mystery, the land of broken hopes and disappointed Christian desires; but also the land that the faith and zeal and enthusiasm of the

[1] James Duthie went to India in 1856, and since 1859 has laboured at Nagercoil in the Travancore Mission. He is still a hale and vigorous worker in that important field, and has long been one of the best known and most respected missionaries in South India.

supporters of the London Missionary Society had marked out for one of the great victories of the Gospel. Two ardent and able Welshmen had had a great part in planting effectually in that seeming thorny soil the seed of the Gospel. Since 1835, by the will of the merciless heathen Queen, the island had been closed to Christian effort, all missionaries banished, and all native Christians persecuted even unto death. It was known that many had boldly and bravely endured death in very cruel forms rather than deny Christ. It was known that the seed was growing secretly. It was known from all the Christian centuries that the Gospel is never so certain of final triumph as when the soil of a land is consecrated by the blood of the martyrs. The very danger and the hardships of such a field made it attractive to the ardent young missionary.

But there was also a strong personal reason which doubtless had something to do in turning the thoughts of Griffith John to the land that was then so dark. He was engaged to be married to the daughter of David Griffiths, one of the two Welsh fathers of the Madagascar Mission. Mr. Griffiths went to the island in 1821. He was permitted to share in the early and wonderful triumph of the Gospel there. In company with David Jones, he laid firmly and well the foundation of Madagascar evangelisation and civilisation. These two men successfully accomplished the immense task of translating the whole Bible into Malagasy, a work completed only as the dark shadows were falling upon the infant Church. Compelled to quit the island, David Griffiths was allowed in 1840 to return as a

trader, and during his residence there was enabled in many ways to be of service to the persecuted Christians. But he was compelled to leave the island finally in 1841.

It can easily be understood how powerful an attraction Madagascar was likely to possess for a young man coming into intimate family relationship with a veteran like David Griffiths, and with a missionary history like his.

The following extracts from letters written at this period throw fresh light upon his views and experiences at the critical time when the sphere of his life's work was being determined for him :—

'BEDFORD, *March* 10, 1854.

'This is quite a working place. But, oh, how glad I would be if the doors were opened for Madagascar! My heart is there now. I know it will be difficult to part with dear friends, more so than I can anticipate at present. But then, I go to be the honoured instrument in the hands of God to enlighten some hundreds of those that lie in darkness and superstition, to direct their attention to Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Oh, what a glorious idea, it overpowers everything! When I think what I may be, it fills me with the strongest desires to see the day when I shall behold the shores of Madagascar, plant my footsteps in its soil, and proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to its thousands.'

'*July* 3, 1854.

'I am at Bedford still. I don't know what they intend doing with me, nor where they intend sending me. Madagascar seems to be very remote. I have had some intimations that they want me to turn my thoughts to China. The Directors consider it to be their duty to send me to Madagascar if I stand positively for that, but they would be glad were I to offer myself for China. Mr. Jukes spoke to me in a very kind way some time ago on the subject. "It is much easier," said he, "to get men for Madagascar than for China, and they would do as well as yourself in Madagascar; but it would be difficult to get persons so well adapted for China." And then he advised me to think over this seriously. However, my mind hitherto is stayed upon Madagascar. If the Directors were to apply to me directly for China, it would place me in a fix. China is a noble country, though I am not at all fascinated with it. I don't mind much where I go if Madagascar does not open.'

The final appeal came in a letter from the Rev. E. Prout, one of the Secretaries of the London Missionary Society, dated September 4, 1854:—

'MY DEAR SIR,—When you offered yourself to our Society, we were, of course, aware of your desire to labour in Madagascar—the door to which island then appearing to be on the point of opening,—and had events occurred in accordance with our anticipation we should not have attempted to divert your attention

from that mission. You are aware, however, that up to this time insurmountable difficulties have prevented the fulfilment of our purpose, and although we believe that our hope is merely deferred, that is reason enough both for you and for ourselves to reconsider our previous decision.

'Meanwhile, you are aware, the providence of God has very marvellously opened the way for greatly extended missionary operations in China under circumstances singularly auspicious, and you are aware also that our Directors design to take advantage of this state of things for the extension of their labours in that Empire.

'As we believe you possess qualifications for useful effort there, we have come to the conclusion that it would be wise to appoint you to the mission, and I have been instructed by our Board to convey to you this conviction. You are, I am sure, too well acquainted with this sphere of labour, and with the recent events which have awakened our hopes for the future, to require any arguments or persuasion in order to induce you seriously to consider its claims, and I greatly miscalculate if you do not concur in the judgment that in no part of the world could Christian men devote their energies with a brighter prospect of success. But although I will not at present urge the wishes of our Directors and the wants of China upon your thoughtful attention by any array of facts or arguments, I shall be happy to answer any question you may wish to propose or to aid you in any way to arrive at a right conclusion.

'We have heard from time to time from Mr. Jukes

with great satisfaction of your progress, and I doubt not but that the months you are now spending at Bedford will bring forth good fruit in future years.'

While pondering over this most important matter, Griffith John wrote as follows to Mr. Jacob:—

'A letter from the Mission House (a copy of which I forward to you) came to hand this morning. You know my sentiments and feelings respecting Madagascar, so I need not expatiate upon them. China is a very important sphere of labour, and because of that I prefer being driven than run.

'I am willing to submit to the will of the Lord; the question is, what is His will? Oh, may God direct my path, and open mine eyes that I may see the way I should go.

'I have not answered Mr. Prout's letter yet, wishing to hear from you first. Will you have the kindness to write by return of post, if you have time? Perhaps you will also show this letter to our valued and highly esteemed friend Mr. Griffiths. I have always attached great worth to his counsel, and in this case I shall highly value his advice. If I am to go to China, the hand of Providence is very marked in my removal to Bedford.'

The decision to accept the Directors' call to China, and the feelings which this momentous settlement of the course of his future life had awakened in his mind, are reported in another letter to Mr. Jacob dated Bedford, January 6, 1855:—

'A year has elapsed since I left Wales. By looking

back upon it I feel as if I had spent only a couple of weeks in England. I have just returned after spending my Christmas at Woodbridge with our old friend Mr. Griffiths. I enjoyed myself very much. I spent two Sundays there and had to preach five times.

'I have complied with the request of the Directors in respect to China. I don't know exactly when we shall be sent out, probably about the commencement of the spring. If that be the case I shall see you very soon. But there is a degree of sadness about our next meeting to which I do not like to look forward. It will be a meeting of a very short duration, but followed by a parting for a very long time, probably never to see each other on earth again. I wish to put the emphasis upon the word earth, because I trust and hope that we shall meet in heaven, there to enjoy a happy eternity in the society of each other.

'There is a glorious work before me. When looking at it, I cannot but rejoice, but with trembling. It is both humbling and cheering. Oh that I could but feel that I am not my own, and that I am thoroughly consecrated to God. How difficult it is to get rid of selfishness. The drunkard may set aside his drunkenness, the blasphemer his blasphemy, his curses and oaths, but it is almost impossible to destroy self and live, to be and not to be at the same time. Self clings to us wherever we go; we find it with us in all our engagements, however sacred they may be. This is the great demon that continually seeks the mastery over us, the old Adam that perpetually speaks within us and driving us from God and goodness. Oh, could

I but feel as Paul felt when he said, "To me to live is Christ."'

From the autobiographical sketch we learn something more of the course of events to the time of Griffith John's departure for the mission-field:—

'In the beginning of September 1854, I received a letter from Mr. Prout, in which he called my attention to the fact that the door to Madagascar was still closed, and likely to remain so for some time, and suggested that I should turn my thoughts to China. Now, Madagascar was the one spot in the mission-field that had won my heart. I loved Madagascar, and my one wish was to live and die there. China had not been very much in my thought, and I felt no special drawing to it. As I, however, could not go to Madagascar, it mattered but little to me to what part of the world the Directors might send me. I was determined to be a missionary, and was prepared to go anywhere. On September 15 I sent my reply expressing my willingness to go to China. Soon after I received another letter from Mr. Prout informing me that I had been appointed to China. I cannot say that I was sorry; I cannot say I was glad. I simply felt that the Directors ought to know best, and that it was for me to obey orders. I may say here, however, that I was not long in China before I was made to feel that my appointment was of God. During these nearly fifty years, I have never ceased to thank God for the kind providence that brought me to this land. I have never had a single longing for Madagascar, or any other sphere, since my arrival at Shanghai in 1855. China has

filled my soul, kindled my imagination, and drawn out my heart as no other non-Christian land could have done. At least this is my firm belief.

'On March 15, 1855, I received a letter from Mr. Prout saying that I was to leave for China in May, and urging the necessity of making preparations for the journey. I left Bedford on March 26 for Swansea, was ordained at Ebenezer Chapel, Swansea, and was married to Margaret Jane Griffiths, daughter of the Rev. David Griffiths of Madagascar, on April 13. We sailed for Shanghai on May 21, 1855, accompanied by our colleagues, the Rev. A. Williamson and Mrs. Williamson.

'Just before leaving London a little incident occurred which gave me a good deal of amusement. After the missionary sermon at Surrey Chapel, there was a luncheon given at the Mission House, to which Mr. Williamson and myself were invited. Whilst I was short and slender, Mr. Williamson was very tall, and somewhat commanding in his bearing. We went together to the Mission House. Mr. Williamson took the lead and I followed. Just as I was entering, the beadle in charge of the door grabbed me, and bade me stop. Mr. Williamson, finding that I was not following, turned back to see what had become of me. "Why do you," said Mr. Williamson to the beadle, "detain Mr. John? He is my colleague. We are going to China together." Hearing this, the beadle relaxed his grasp and allowed me to pass on. But just as I escaped I heard him say in a loud voice, "So it has come to this, sending children to convert the

Chinese." The beadle in London reminded me of the deacons at Alltwen. From both I learned a lesson which has been of life-long service to me.'

'It does not come within the scope of this book to dwell at any length upon the course of events which Mr. Prout referred to in his letter informing Mr. Griffith John of the wish of the Directors to send him to China. 'The providence of God,' he wrote, 'has very marvellously opened the door for greatly extended missionary operations in China.'

The story of the way in which the door of China was forced open is variously told, but, whatever the true version may be, subsequent events show that it affords a striking illustration of the providence by which God has repeatedly in the life of the world over-ruled human ambition, selfishness, and enterprise to the furtherance of purposes which men have not dreamed of or have not sympathised with while they were pursuing their own designs, and has brought the highest and permanent good out of an evil which man has wrought.

There are some whose patriotism is of such a character that apparently they can never see anything wrong in the action of their country towards other Powers. To judge by one version of the quarrel between Britain and China, it was a pathetic illustration in real life of the fable of the wolf and the lamb, the lamb being the innocent and honourable British traders who, while engaged in a most lawful and creditable, not to say beneficent traffic, were the objects of gratuitous, persistent, and shameful ill-treatment by the

insolent and arrogant Chinese wolf. Fortunately, unlike the lamb in the fable, they were rescued in the nick of time by their natural protector and shepherd, the British Government, and the wolf's teeth were drawn.

This view, which is gratifying to our national self-love, is not the view of outsiders, nor is it the view of those who are accustomed to judge of actions by the Christian standard of moral responsibility for the effect of our actions upon others. It is, of course, quite possible that, apart from the opium traffic, there would sooner or later have been a rupture between Britain and China. The exclusiveness of the Chinese and their contempt for foreigners, the restrictions placed upon trade by confining it to one port in China, and the limitations even at the one port by which all dealings of the foreign traders had to be carried on through a syndicate of Chinese merchants known as the Hong, and every communication between them and the authorities had to pass through the same medium, created difficulties which the pushful and energetic enterprise of the Western trader was not likely to brook in perpetuity.

It is, however, very difficult for the impartial student to escape from the conclusion that the friction between the Chinese officials and the traders was enormously increased by the traffic in opium. Apart from all other causes of quarrel, the Government of China would have been amply justified, alike on economic grounds and because of the mischievous effects of the drug on the health and the morals of the people, in

taking the most energetic measures for preventing the wholesale introduction of opium into the country.

It may be true, it probably is true, that many of the Chinese officials were utterly venal and corrupt, and that, while making great show of insisting that the law should be obeyed and opium should not be introduced, they were privately reaping large profit by conniving at its introduction. It may be true, it probably is true, that the habit of smoking opium was indulged in by many rich men, men in high place, and prominent officials of the Court. It is undoubtedly true that the Chinese knew the use of opium as a medicine, and had begun to discover its properties as a stimulant, before the trade in opium on the part of the agents of the East India Company began. It was mixed with tobacco for the purpose of smoking as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century. These statements, however, do not invalidate the following facts:—

There is no evidence of the growth of the poppy in China for manufacture of opium until the nineteenth century, and there is abundant evidence that this native production has enormously increased since then, and is still growing.

There is no evidence that, at least during the eighteenth century, the practice of opium-smoking was indulged in except to the most limited extent in the interior of the country. The use of opium was at first and for a long time almost entirely confined to the coast, and to places where it could be got by foreign trade.



There is abundant evidence that the Government of China had for more than a century forbidden the use of opium for smoking purposes. The earliest edict on the subject was issued in Formosa in 1729, and Dr. Edkins states that ever since that year opium-selling for smoking purposes has been treated as a crime by the ruling authorities.

There is very clear evidence that the trade was regarded as contraband, and that, wherever the officials had not been bribed, it was stopped. In 1782, Mr. Fitzhugh, an agent of the East India Company, wrote to the Company: 'The importation of opium is prohibited under very severe penalties. The opium on seizure is burnt, the vessel confiscated, and the Chinese possessing it are liable to death. The contraband trade is only carried on through the excess of corruption on the part of the Customs officials.'

There is equally clear evidence that the contraband trade was carried on mainly, if not entirely, by the officials and representatives of the East India Company; that it was so profitable that complete and elaborate arrangements were made for storing opium on board receiving ships moored off various points of the coast of South China, from which it was run in to the shore by means of swift boats manned by crews armed to the teeth.

The East India Company officially washed their hands of any complicity in a contraband traffic, yet they established a monopoly of opium growing and manufacture in India avowedly for export, China being practically the only market to which it could be

exported. They passed stringent regulations forbidding any of their servants to carry the contraband article to China under pain of instant dismissal, yet every British ship trading with China was obliged to have the licence of the Company, and if any opium other than that grown and prepared by the Company was found on board the licence was cancelled. Every British subject trading in China prior to 1834 was obliged to have the licence of the Company, yet the trade in Indian opium by these British subjects, in the East India Company's ships, a trade which was avowedly contraband, grew from 2330 chests in 1788-89 to 4968 chests in 1809-10. Fifteen years later the amount imported had grown to 10,570 chests, and in the next ten years ending 1835-36 the amount had increased to 17,257 chests, having a value of more than one and a half million sterling. Commissioner Lin may have taken very extreme measures when he insisted upon the surrender of 20,000 chests of opium which were in store, and proceeded to destroy them all. He may have acted in a very high-handed way in stopping the whole of the foreign trade until his requirements had been complied with, but exceptional troubles necessitate heroic remedies. Had Lin been an Englishman dealing with a large and powerful combination of lawless smugglers, every newspaper in the kingdom would have been filled with praise of his firmness, his courage, and his patriotic conduct.

China came off second best in the struggle which ensued, and was compelled by the Treaty of Nanking

to open her doors to the foreigner. Thus the opportunity was given for entering the great Empire with the Gospel, but it yet remains to be seen whether Britain or China will in the long run be the most serious loser by the opium war!

CHAPTER III

SHANGHAI

SHANGHAI, which was to be the centre of Mr. John's labours for the next five years, was one of the five ports opened by the Treaty of Nanking for foreign trade and residence, the other four being Canton, Amoy, Foochow, and Ningpo. It was splendidly situated to become a great centre of trade; for the small river on whose banks it was founded is a tributary of the mighty Yang-tse-kiang, joining the great river just as it enters the sea, and affording anchorage and shelter for a large fleet of ships.

The native city, with a population of 300,000, is situated about ten miles from the mouth of the river at Woosung, and the foreign concessions which constitute the modern city of Shanghai are outside the city wall, and stretch in ever-growing extent down the west bank of the river. At the present time it is the largest and handsomest European settlement in the farther East. Well drained, well lighted, well policed, with its long stretch of stately buildings facing the bund or river front, its streets of substantial houses, its suburban bungalows and gardens, its large and handsome shops and extensive warehouses, it is a striking example of the energy and enterprise of the European.

A dismal stretch of flat, swampy country, only a few feet above the level of the ocean, has, in the course of comparatively few years, been transformed into a stately city, which has become the commercial capital of China, and by far the most important centre of communication between China and the world. It has a population nearly double that of the native city whose name it bears, of whom fully 10,000 are Europeans and Americans.

Shanghai is, in fact, the most striking object-lesson of the great and vital change in the relations between China and the rest of the world which began with the signing of the Treaty of Nanking. Before that time the foreigner was kept at arm's length and treated as a barbarian; the foreign trader was restricted to the precincts of the factories at Canton, and was unable to carry on any business with the people, or to make any representation to the Government, save through the syndicate of native merchants; foreign governments were treated as vassals and inferiors who could not be recognised as having any claim to respect. Shanghai stands for the Open Door, for perfect freedom of intercourse, for absolute equality of political status.

From the missionary standpoint also, Shanghai has from its commencement occupied a position of exceptional importance. It is the natural port of arrival to which all lines of steamers bring their passengers for the greater part of China, and it is the centre from which it is most easy to reach the vast interior of the country. At the time when Griffith John was sent out there was a group of men of

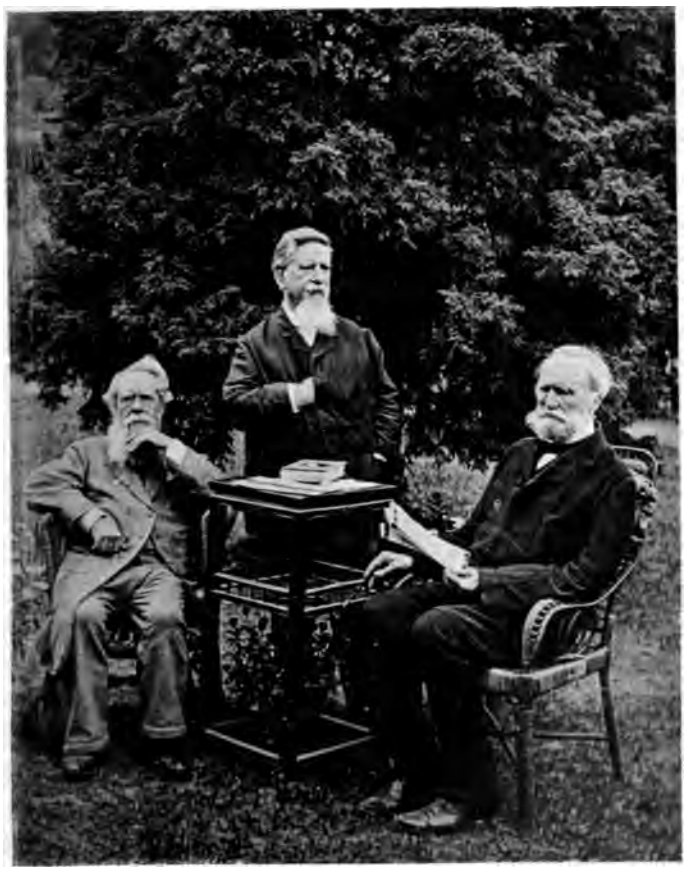
remarkable ability and exceptional spiritual power representing missions in Shanghai. The London Missionary Society, which commenced work as soon as the new port was opened in 1843, had as its representatives Dr. Medhurst, Dr. William Lockhart, Mr. Muirhead, and Mr. Wylie. The Church Missionary Society, whose mission was opened in 1844 by M'Clatchie, was represented by Rev. J. S. Burdon,[1] who was conspicuous for his devoted and intrepid evangelistic tours. Bishop Boone commenced the American Episcopal Mission in 1845.

Among other workers there were two whose names have become household words among those who are acquainted with missionary history. Dr. Hudson Taylor went out to China a few months before Griffith John as an agent of the China Evangelisation Society, and early devoted himself to evangelistic work in the region round Shanghai; and William C. Burns, the saintly and perfervid Scottish evangelistic missionary, was still in Shanghai for six months after the young Welsh missionary arrived.

The field was therefore an exceptionally interesting and important one, and the associations in work were of the most stimulating kind.

A voyage to China in 1855 was a very different matter from one in 1906. The Suez Canal was not opened until twelve years later, so that all communication with the East had to be made by the long sea passage round the Cape, except for the mails and for those passengers who could afford the heavy expense

[1] Afterwards Bishop of Victoria (Hong-Kong) from 1874 to 1896.



Photo] [*Bernard Upward.*

THREE VETERANS.

THE REV. GRIFFITH JOHN, D.D.

THE LATE REV. J. HUDSON TAYLOR, M.D. THE REV. W. A. P. MARTIN, D.D.

Dr. Martin, born 1827, *reached China* 1850.
Dr. J. Hudson Taylor, born 1832, *reached China* 1854.
Dr. Griffith John, born 1831, *reached China* 1855.

and the discomfort of the land transit from Alexandria to Suez. To-day the ordinary passenger reaches Shanghai by a great ocean steamer of from 8000 to 10,000 tons in thirty-eight days, after a voyage the monotony of which is relieved by the excitement of touching at port after port, and throughout which, thanks to the application of modern science, fresh meat, milk, and vegetables, and an abundance of fresh water are supplied without stint.

It was far otherwise in 1855. The sailing vessels in which the journey was made were small; the opportunity of breaking the journey by calling at a port was very rare; the provision was plain—it lacked variety; fresh meat and vegetables were not always to be had, and the supply of fresh water was limited. The time occupied varied from four to five months, and to those who had no resources for work or amusement the voyage became intensely monotonous. On the other hand, the long period of quiet without distractions presented compensations to the student which the modern traveller sometimes longs for. The experiences of the young missionaries are fully described in a letter to Mr. Jacob:—

'SHANGHAI, *October* 4, 1855.

'You see that we have reached our destination safely. We arrived in Shanghai on the 24th ultimo after a voyage of 127 days. We sailed from Gravesend on the 21st of May. On the whole the passage was very pleasant.

'As you know, a voyage to Shanghai is one of the

longest and most dangerous, and the China Sea is particularly dangerous in the months of September and October. We have passed through the regions of hurricanes, typhoons, monsoons (the breaking up of which is generally accompanied by most terrific storms), and through the region of shoals and pirates. We learnt on our arrival that a typhoon occurred only about 150 miles south of us while we were lying at anchor on the night of the 21st ultimo. We also heard of ships being lost and others taken by pirates, but we have been graciously preserved. Nothing was permitted to injure us, either in person or property.

'Nothing occurred to impede our progress. We had not so much as a full gale in any part of our voyage. The ship is not one of the easiest in the water, the least breeze would make her roll and pitch most furiously. The sea was rather rough when we were doubling the Cape; we spent a few sleepless nights at that time, and also on one or two other occasions. But the sea was worth seeing, especially in the morning after a boisterous night; the sight of the waves was grand, some rushing and swelling into large mountains, then breaking into a broad white foam, others rising and subsiding majestically, others running along as if they were going to bury the ship and all. Sometimes they struck against the side of the ship until she danced again. Then we who had not been accustomed to such tossings frequently found ourselves reeling from one side of the cabin to the other, and at other times lying on the carpet, having been thrown off our couch. Such occurrences were by no means pleasant, but we had no

reason to complain. They were a mere nothing in comparison to the many blessings we enjoyed, and of course the blessings were more highly appreciated after such occasional interference or breaking in upon our comforts. We were detained also by calms and headwinds, especially in the China Sea. Had this not been the case we should have been in Shanghai from ten to twenty days sooner. We both had to pay tribute to old Father Neptune rather often at first and occasionally throughout the voyage.

'Our health has been very good; both Mrs. John and myself look much stronger than when we left England. We saw some fish, though not so many as I expected to see. Several large whales passed us one morning; they were worth seeing. If you want to have an idea of them just read Job's description of the leviathan. With the exception of flying-fish and porpoises, which are plentiful enough, we saw no other kind. But I will tell you what would be worth your coming from Wales to the southern hemisphere to witness, and that is the beautiful sunset of a fine evening. I have not witnessed anything worthy of being compared with it in point of sublime grandeur. Many a time did I sit on the poop watching with intense interest this magnificent scene. You have seen nothing like it in the northern hemisphere. The beautifully clear sky together with the appearance of new constellations one night after the other has made the voyage very pleasant to me.

'The life on the ocean wave is not the most favourable for hard study. Yet I managed to do a little in that way. I read nearly the whole series of

the Congregational Lectures, so that I have a pretty good stock of theology in my brains, Henry Rogers' Essays in three volumes, Macaulay's Essays in two volumes, Barnes' Notes on the Revelation, Herschel on Astronomy, Mitchell on Astronomy, a large volume on the steam-engine, Carpenter's Physiology, books on chemistry, electricity, magnetism, mechanics, and other branches of science. Several other books of a lighter character I read. I read some portions of my Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament, studied some of the higher branches of mathematics. So my time, as you perceive, was not altogether spent in vain. I believe I know a little more now than when I saw you last. All this will be of some use in future. I have brought out with me a chemical apparatus, an electrical machine, a microscope, and a stereoscope, so that I might in future give the Chinese some idea of these things. A missionary need not forget the civilisation of the people among whom he labours.

'Well, we got to Shanghai at last in health and strength. We were received by the brethren here very kindly and respectfully. We are staying for the present with Dr. Medhurst, waiting for our house, which is being repaired and cleaned. It will be all ready for us in the course of a week or so. The missionaries here are all kind, affable, hard-working men, especially those connected with our Society. There are in all from twenty-five to thirty missionaries, belonging to the various denominations, both American and European, in Shanghai. We have two chapels in the city, in which two or three sermons are preached every day to

audiences varying from 50 to 200; indeed, you might preach all day from 6 o'clock in the morning till night, and you would have plenty of hearers. The country all around here is open for missionary operations. A missionary may penetrate into the country two or three hundred miles in every direction without being molested; a wide door is opening in China for the preaching of the Gospel.

'The city of Shanghai is one of the filthiest in this world. I have seen nothing to be compared to it in dirt and filth, it surpasses everything. Of course, the Chinese are notorious for their filth; they are in great need of sanitary measures—happily we live outside the city.'

Thus the contemporary letter. Here are Dr. John's impressions of the same period, written nearly fifty years later:—

'A very enthusiastic reception was given to us on our arrival at Shanghai. All seemed delighted to see us, and all strove to make us feel at home. Shanghai was manned at the time with a noble band of missionaries. There was the venerable and venerated Dr. Medhurst, crowned with forty years of magnificent service, and still busy at work on the Delegates' version of the Scriptures. He was looked upon as the corypheus among the sinologues of his day, and a very prince among the missionaries. I found the great doctor very genial, very accessible, and very helpful. The impression he made on my mind was deep and lasting. He was the acknowledged head of the mission,

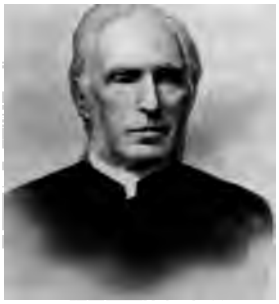
but he never tried to rule. Nevertheless he did rule. His wish was law to us, for the simple reason that we trusted his judgment and felt the warmth of his heart. Dr. Medhurst left Shanghai, September 10, 1856, and arrived in England, January 22, 1857, but died January 24, two days after his arrival. Is it not strange that no memoir of the life and labours of this remarkable man has ever been written?

'There was Dr. Lockhart, busily engaged in healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. His reputation as a physician stood very high, and was very widely spread. The Shanghai folks looked upon him as a sort of marvel, and were never tired of talking about the wonders of his art. He was the soul of kindness, a tremendous worker, and one of the social pillars of the Shanghai community.

'There was Mr. Wylie, the famous Chinese scholar, yet so modest that, while others were sounding his praises, he himself was profoundly unconscious of his fame. He would never read a line of what appeared in the public prints in praise of his work, and any verbal compliment paid to him in a private way he treated as an insult. Alexander Wylie was one of the most remarkable men I have ever met, whether in China or out of China.

'There was Edkins, diving into the deep depths of Buddhism, unfolding the mysteries of the Chinese language and literature, and giving, even at that time, promise of becoming the great sinologue which in later years he has more than fulfilled. Between Edkins and







A GROUP OF CONTEMPORARY MISSIONARIES.

THE REV. DR. MEDHURST. MR. ALEXANDER WYLIE.

THE REV. DR. LOCKHART.

THE REV. DR. MUIRHEAD. THE REV. DR. EDKINS.

myself the closest friendship sprang up at once. We made many missionary journeys together, and spent much time in discussing all manner of subjects, theological, metaphysical, literary, and missionary. Dr. Edkins, thank God, is still with us, and feeling as deep an interest in China and the progress of the Gospel in China as he did in those earlier days. May his valuable life be spared for years to come, and may it be given to him to see that not a few of the dreams which he and I used to dream in my Shanghai days have turned out to be more than

> The children of an idle brain,
> Begot of nothing but vain fantasy.[1]

'And there was William Muirhead, one of the great evangelists the Christian Church has given to the Chinese people. When I speak of him as evangelist, it must not be supposed that I wish it to be understood that he confined himself to preaching. He wrote and translated many books, not a few of which are in circulation at the present time. He was a well-known author when I arrived in China. But it is as an evangelist to the Chinese, preaching in season and out of season the unsearchable riches of Christ, that William Muirhead stands out most prominently before my mental eye. Every typical missionary has his speciality. Muirhead's speciality was preaching.

'It was an unspeakable privilege to be thrown at the very commencement of my missionary life in close association with these splendid men. I could not have

[1] Since this was written, the great student, sinologue, and missionary has passed away. Dr. Edkins died April 23, 1905.

been put into a better training school. The five or six years spent at Shanghai were given mainly to the important work of learning the language, observing the methods of work adopted by my seniors, and trying various experiments of my own.'

The young missionary was evidently gifted by nature with the linguistic faculty in an exceptional degree, but he also had the grace of application, and he was constantly inspired by a high and true ideal of his duty as a student of the language of the people to whom he had come as a messenger of Christ. The references to his linguistic studies in his letters to his pastor and friend Mr. Jacob show that he must have worked very hard, and the thorough groundwork he did in those early days was the foundation for that exceptional power as a preacher and writer in Chinese which has so markedly distinguished his labours. The letter to Mr. Jacob giving an account of his voyage and arrival ends with an expression of his purpose in regard to the acquisition of Chinese :—

'I have just commenced the study of the language : I don't expect to find much difficulty in acquiring it. This time six months I hope to be able to preach in it, and unless that be the case I shall be exceedingly disappointed. I am anxious, I long to be able to speak of Christ to the people. I can just ask them at present if they believe in Christ, and tell them that it is the best thing they possibly can do. Pray for me, my dear brother, that I may be made eminently useful in China !'

Nine months later he writes :—

'In taking a retrospective view of the past nine months I find I have not spent my time altogether in vain nor my strength for nought. I have read nearly all the books printed in the Shanghai dialect, a considerable portion of the New Testament in the higher style, any quantity of tracts. I shall soon get through four of the Chinese principal books. The others shall follow. For some months I have been in the habit of going into the temples, the tea gardens, and other places to distribute tracts and preach in my humble way. I am able now to speak for half-an-hour or three-quarters with considerable ease and fluency. To my great satisfaction, I find I am very well understood. This is a very great thing in speaking to the Chinese, because so much depends on the tones, a mere raising or falling, shortening or lengthening of the voice makes all the difference imaginable in a word which is in every other respect the same, that is if written in the Roman character.

'This makes the acquisition of the spoken language both a tedious and difficult task. The language is a colossus. It is decidedly difficult to acquire, as appears from the fact that no European has hitherto completely mastered it. I like to study it very much; it is no tiresome work to me. Its difficulty only intensifies my desire to grapple with it and finally to lay it prostrate at my feet. The conquering of this language is worth a long and manly struggle. Who would feel it a burdensome task to learn a language which is intended by the providence of God to be a channel through which divine truth like a life-giving stream is to

flow into four hundred million thirsty but immortal souls.'

Again, writing three months later, he says:—

'I told you that I intended to be able to preach in Chinese before the end of the year. I am happy to inform you that my anticipations have been realised in this respect. I have been in the habit of preaching in the chapels for more than two months. I have also paid considerable attention to the characters. I mention this because I know that any success of mine gives you as much pleasure as it does to myself. I wish to conquer the language to the extent it is capable of being conquered by a foreigner. Nothing short of this will satisfy me.

'You may say this is ambition. Confessedly it is. But is there anything sinful in such an ambition? I wish and long to be an efficient missionary of the Cross in this land, and I am convinced that a thorough knowledge of their literature is essential to this. There are two classes of missionaries here, those who devote themselves entirely to the spoken dialect of the place, and think it not worth their while to pay any attention to the literature of the people. The other class do, and they are able to meet the Chinese on their own grounds, confound them in their own territory. The latter are respected and the former despised. Nothing gives a missionary greater power over the Chinese than a conviction on their part that he is well up in their books, and knows their contents and meaning as well as they themselves do.'

In October 1856, just twelve months after his

arrival, he undertook an evangelistic tour into the country entirely alone, and in telling Mr. Jacob of his attempt he says:—

'SUNG-KIONG, *October* 31, 1856.

'The first year should be given almost entirely to the acquisition of the language; the future progress of a missionary depends very materially on the foundation which he lays the first year. I acted on this conviction, and therefore have had but little time to write much. It is because of this determination that I am now able to go into the country alone to distribute books and preach the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is my first journey alone into the country. On previous occasions I only accompanied one or the other of my brethren in the mission. I have now ventured for the first time to go alone, with the intention of spending the chief part of this winter in itinerating, in penetrating the country in every direction from Shanghai, for the purpose of proclaiming the one true and living God and Jesus Christ whom He sent. What a glorious work! Can there be anything more worthy of the powers which God has bestowed upon us? To a believing Christian no idea can be more noble or ennobling than that he is a co-worker with God in the salvation of the world.

'I left Shanghai this morning for Sung-Kiong, a large city about fifty miles distant. The annual examination is held here this week, hundreds of the first scholars in the whole country around have met to be examined. We have anchored within four miles of the

place, it being too dark to proceed further this night. To-morrow morning early I hope to appear in the midst of those aspirants after worldly honours with the everlasting Gospel in my hands. I have brought two large bags full of Christian books with me, which I hope to distribute among the students.

'*November* 1.—This morning when I woke, I found myself at the west gate of the city of Sung-Kiong. After breakfast, Wong, the colporteur, and myself proceeded to the place where the examination was held. We took along with us a good supply of books. We had glorious opportunities of preaching, which we availed ourselves of, and of satisfactorily distributing our books. These were eagerly sought and gladly received. Our preaching was listened to attentively by some, by others in a very indifferent manner; no marks of displeasure or ill-will were manifested by any party.

'As we were going along in the afternoon distributing books, we met with a respectable-looking man, to whom Wong offered a book. He took it, looked at the title-page, and then tore it in pieces. Wong was very much disconcerted, if not enraged, at this, and began blaming the man in a very loud tone for not returning the book if he did not like it. I stood astonished, because I never saw such a thing done before, and I have distributed thousands since my arrival in China. When the people saw that we were rather put about by this unprecedented insolence, they bid us not be angry, because the man was a Roman Catholic.



'In the afternoon we enjoyed the same fine opportunities of preaching and distributing our books among the graduates. After this we returned to our boat for the night.

'*November* 2.—This is the Lord's Day. Alas! there is no Sabbath in China. On this day, as on any other, there is nothing but noise, tumult, confusion, impiety. Though it is probable that their ancestors in high antiquity worshipped the only true God, the knowledge of Him is almost, if not entirely extinct, among the present generation, and has been so for many ages gone by. They know not the God that made them, they see not the Divine Presence that fills all in all, and what is worse, they care not for knowing, they hate seeing. Wong and myself went out to-day again to preach and distribute books; got large congregations to listen. This afternoon the graduates seemed to pay more attention to what they heard than on former occasions. We returned to the boat after our day's labour was over, hoping and praying that the spirit of the living God might go forth with those books and prepare the heart for its reception, that our efforts might not be in vain, but that the seed sown might bring forth a goodly harvest.

'*November* 3.—Started this morning from Sung-Kiong, and reached Shanghai at 8.30 P.M.'

During the first two years of his life in China, Griffith John made Shanghai his home and the chief scene of his labours, though he took many excursions into the district around, either with his colleagues or

alone. Throughout his whole career he has placed the evangelistic side of the missionary's work in the foremost place. In later years his time has been largely and growingly occupied with literary work; but preaching has been his chief joy, and, as will be seen from his later letters, it is the agency upon which he has always relied as the most effective means of spreading the knowledge of the Gospel and bringing men to Christ. This view of the missionary's calling was natural to him, for he was a 'born preacher.' It was stimulated and made more definite by the experience and enthusiasm of the men with whom he was in closest fellowship, and by the circumstances of the mission. His letters, however, show that while he gave himself with his whole heart to this form of work, and was eager and fervent as an evangelist, he was no stranger to those experiences of depression and disappointment which every enthusiastic worker must experience. The cry 'Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?' is familiar as the voice of his own soul to every missionary among the heathen.

The following extracts from Mr. John's correspondence of this period tell of his movements, and reproduce some of the lights and shadows of his experience.

On June 29, 1856, he wrote:—

'SHANGHAI, *June* 29, 1856.

'I have now been nine months in China, and during this period I have seen a good deal of both country

and people. In company with one of my fellow-missionaries, I have taken several trips into the interior, the longest of which was three weeks, the furthest about one hundred and fifty miles. Two or three years ago such a thing was not heard of as a missionary proceeding so far and remaining for so long a time without fear of molestation. It could only be done clandestinely and at extreme peril. However, at present, taking Shanghai as the centre, we can sweep a circle of a hundred and fifty miles radius. This is a great achievement in China, as will be seen when the density of the population and the exclusive policy of the Chinese Government are considered.'

On the following day he wrote again :—

'The willingness of the people to come and hear the truth, together with the desire they manifest to learn and read our books, is very encouraging. A missionary need only enter a temple, one of the tea gardens, or even stand at the corner of a street, and any number of people will gather round him ; they will stretch forth their hands with eagerness for the books or tracts which he may have by him.

'But, on the other hand, the Chinese seem to me to be the most indifferent, cold, callous, irreligious people that I have ever seen or read of. They are entirely absorbed with the question, "What shall we eat, or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" They listen to the truth, nod their heads, and say, "Very good," but it ends there. It does not seem to reach their hearts. All this, however, when received in

the proper light tends to provoke to great activity and more entire devotedness.'

Three months later he sent his friend and former pastor a long and interesting account of his experiences and encouragements :—

'*October* 5, 1856.

'During the last half-year, several incidents, illustrative of the nature of our work, and the peculiar difficulties with which we have to contend as missionaries in this place, have occurred. Whilst there are many things which tend to depress the spirit and damp the zeal of the sincere and devoted missionary, there is also, as will appear from the following, abundant reason to thank God and take courage. The work of God is slowly yet surely progressing among us, and from what we witness at present we may believingly look forward to the promised period when the "little one shall become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation."

'Allusions have often been made to the feeble influence of idolatry in the mind of the Chinese. During the last half-year we have seen striking exemplifications of this. For several months the surrounding country suffered much from drought. At first both mandarins and people were assiduous in praying to Heaven and entreating their idols to send down the fertilising showers; but as these continued to be withheld, the religious observances were also abandoned, and it was a common expression that the idols were altogether useless. The priests, after perambulating the streets

for successive days in vain, utterly lost caste, and were spoken of with contempt by all. After this the people seemed inclined to listen to our instructions, and to appreciate our efforts in exhorting them to pray to God, the only source of both temporal and eternal blessing. However, when the rains began to fall, they soon sank into their former indifference.

'But though the influence of idolatry on the general mind is superficial, that of Confucianism is far from being so. On the contrary, it penetrates the very depths of their soul, entwines itself around all their thoughts and affections, and holds them with a tenacious grasp. Some weeks ago a learned Chinese scholar and a rigid disciple of Confucius called upon Mr. Muirhead, and expressed himself as very displeased at a comparison having been made between the person, character, and work of Christ and those of his venerated sage. "Such a thing," said he, "should not have been done by any means. Christianity is a very small affair, and the Cross, though in external form extending in all directions, thus indicating that it is designed to embrace the whole world, is absurd. As to the doctrine connected with it, it can never endure the test of ages as in the case of the Confucian." He was told that Jesus was the Son of God, that He came down from heaven for the highest, holiest, and most glorious of all purposes, whilst Confucius was only a man and a sage, like many of a similar character in all parts of the world. At this saying he became violent in the extreme, and replied, "If you say anything of Confucius, I assure you I would rather go to hell with him than

with Jesus to heaven." It was answered that nothing bad had been said of Confucius, but that he himself was bad enough to act and speak in such a way, when he instantly rejoined, "In regard to myself, you may speak of me as ill as you please, for in that you cannot be far wrong."

'The custom of worshipping ancestors perpetually comes before us as one of the chief obstacles to the universal spread of Christianity in this land. A short time ago one of our number was called upon by an individual who had learned much of Christianity from the missionaries at Ningpo, and was desirous of professing it; "but," said he, "I cannot do so, since in that case I should have no face in the presence of my friends; if I were to cast aside the worship of ancestors, I should thereby incur reproach and opposition from all around me." Several passages of Scripture which refer to the subject of an open and public confession were alluded to, the force of which he readily admitted; he was then reminded of the saying of Confucius, "Not to give unto others what he did not wish others to give unto him." He was asked, "When you are dead, do you wish your children to sacrifice to you?" he answered, "No." Then he was asked again, how was it that he sacrificed to the dead whilst at the same time he acknowledged the custom to be vain and useless. To this he was unable to reply, but asked for Christian books and went his way.

'The great and glorious doctrine of the Cross, that which was a stumbling-block to the Jew and folly to the Greek, is both to the Chinese. They see the out-

ward transaction, but cannot penetrate into the depths of its meaning. They behold its shame, but are blind to its glory. A Chinese Mohammedan, after listening to the exposition of the truth for a time, called upon Mr. Muirhead and said, "Teacher, your doctrine is very good, but I beg to advise you in regard to this point. If you go about preaching that Jesus is the Son of God, multitudes will believe you, but you must withhold all reference to Him having died on the Cross. That, in the view of the Chinese, is ignominious, and altogether an unworthy matter to be talked of."

'He was told that this was the cardinal truth we have to preach, and that apart from it our doctrine had no meaning; 'but,' said he, 'speak of His teaching and miracles, and the people will be sufficiently interested.' Then he was directed to read the first chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and then he acknowledged that the doctrine of the Cross was an inseparable and main element of Christianity.

'He brought several of his own persuasion with him, and with them we had long discussions on the doctrines of the Atonement. At first they were disposed to deride, but afterwards became more serious, and admitted that the arguments in its favour were very cogent. They were familiar with the names of some of the ancient patriarchs, having learnt them in connection with their own creed.

'There has been no abatement in the number of our audiences as compared with former years, and the attention of the people to the truth preached has been undiminished. Some very hopeful characters have

come before us. One is a young man respectably connected. He resides at Kia Shen, about seventy miles from this, a place which has been frequently visited by missionaries, and where the Scriptures have been largely circulated. Another is a countryman from a place about thirteen miles from here. Though unable to read, we were struck with his earnestness and knowledge of Christian truths. After a continuous attendance at the chapel, he told us that he had met with considerable opposition from his neighbours, and that the members of his own family regarded him as insane because of his speaking so much to them of the folly of idolatry. Gradually, however, their opposition subsided, and they became more and more favourably disposed towards him, as his real sentiments were better understood. On Mr. Muirhead promising to visit his place and establish a preaching-station there, he seemed highly delighted. When the visit was made, Mr. Muirhead was pleased to find that he had gone around the immediate neighbourhood making Jesus known to his fellow-countrymen as the only Saviour of the world.

'Not long since we met with a pleasing instance of a young man on board of a Chinese junk from Amoy. He heard the Gospel preached there, and had received Christian books, which he had carefully read. By this means he had carefully acquired a clear and accurate knowledge of the way of salvation, and his heart was full of zeal and joy with what he had found. He had never conversed with any of the missionaries in that quarter, and it was only on our sending a colporteur

on board the junk that he was discovered. He had endured much persecution from those around him, because of his speaking to them about their souls, and his expostulating with them on the habits of opium-smoking and other depraved practices. However, he was resolved to persevere in dependence on the grace of God.'

The next two extracts indicate more clearly the influence of that sense of depression and disappointment which is so well known as a second stage in the thought and experience of the missionary. After the glamour of his first inexperienced contact with the new conditions has passed away, and his eye becomes familiarised with the actual facts in all their naked sadness, the earnest and eager worker experiences a shock of disappointment which is often nigh unto despair. Then comes the test of his faith in God's saving purpose in Christ and in his own commission to be a worker for God. In some natures the struggle to get through deep waters to firm foothold again is long-continued and severe, in others faith retains even in the flood of great waters a firm and conscious hold upon the great Leader's hand, and the sense of renewed certainty and the inspiration of renewed assurance come again speedily.

'I am happy to inform you, that upon the whole we have had very good health since our arrival in this place. We have no reason to complain, but many to be thankful.

'The difficulties that we have to contend with in

China are not of a physical kind, but intellectual, spiritual, and moral. The acquisition of this colossal language requires great mental effort, nothing but constant and severe application can overcome its difficulties. The sweat of the brain is the chief condition of success in this part of our work. Again, here are people well versed in their own literature, they have their holy men, their sages, their scholars. They are proud of these men, their memories are fondly cherished by them, they worship them as gods; they study their writings, they commit them to memory, they treasure up their thoughts and look upon them as far more precious than the most precious pearls. A doctrine which pretends to speak of a person more holy than their holy men is, in their estimation, false and blasphemy, hence the difficulty to get them to believe in the superiority of Jesus. They will allow that He may have been a foreign sage, but far inferior to Confucius and others. The doctrines of Christ they allow are good, but not to be compared with the doctrines of their own holy and wise men in point of depth and sublimity. They are inflated with pride and self-conceit, and they despise everything that is not their own and treat it with supreme contempt.

'The Chinese are sunk also in gross materialism. The world, the seen, is everything. It is with the greatest difficulty they can be got to think for one moment on the spiritual, the unseen, the eternal; these are substanceless inanities to them. Confucius, the most holy of their holy men, says, "Respect the gods, but keep them at a distance." From this you will see

how difficult it is to bring the truths of the Gospel to bear upon the minds and conscience of this people.'

'SHANGHAI, *September* 1, 1857.

'The good work in China is moving, but very slowly. The people are as hard as steel. They are eaten up, both soul and body, by the world. They don't seem to feel that there can be reality in anything beyond sense. To them our doctrine is foolishness, our preaching contemptible, our talk jargon, our thoughts insanity, and our hopes and fears mere brain phantoms. We discuss with them, we best them in argument, we reason them into silence and shame, but the whole falls upon them like showers on the sandy desert. Think of the conversion of four hundred millions of the most proud, superstitious, and godless people of the human race. Sometimes I am ready to give up in despair and think that China is doomed to destruction, that to raise it out of its state of moral and spiritual degradation is a matter of impossibility. However, the promises of the Bible soon dissipate the gloom. We are told there that those "from the land of Sinim" as well as those from afar are to come, and this promise is yea and amen in Christ.

'You see, my brother, that I write now in a different tone from what I did on my first arrival in Shanghai. Then my ignorance of the language and habits of this people prevented me forming to myself a just and righteous judgment. I saw, but did not perceive. For some time, however, I have been able to take somewhat deeper than a mere surface view of

things, to break the shell and discern the real state of the kernel, to go behind the scene and catch a glimpse of matters within. Don't imagine that I am faltering in my work; I trust that these difficulties in their influence upon my mind are impulsive rather than dejective. "What is impossible with man is possible with God." This is my stay.'

A strange feature in Chinese life and character which has been frequently noticed is referred to in the following letter:—

'*October* 6, 1857.

'We are plunged again over head and ears into another war. Affairs in India assume a very serious aspect. There can be but little doubt as to the ultimate issue, but it is sad to contemplate the slaughtering which has already prevailed.

'Lord Elgin has just returned to Hong-Kong. He is expected daily at Shanghai. His future proceedings are altogether unknown to any here. Some suppose that hostile proceedings will commence at Canton immediately. Others think that he will go to Peking at once. I am happy to inform you that we are quite comfortable here; we have no wars nor rumours of wars in this part. The people of Shanghai take no more interest in the Canton war than they do in the Indian. I have just returned from a tour in the interior; never was asked once about Canton; came in contact with thousands, spoke to thousands, but none seemed to know that anything has occurred between us and the Cantonese. The people here are as well disposed

as ever. You in England and Wales may think this strange, but such is the fact.'

As the end of the second year drew near, the country work increasingly claimed his attention and occupied his energies. On October 6, 1857, he wrote:—

'At the end of my second year in China I feel disposed to write you a brief account of the kind of work I have been pursuing during the last twelve months. Of course, a large portion of my time has been devoted to the study of the Chinese language and books. In addition to the Shanghai dialect, in which I have felt pretty well at home for some time, I have paid considerable attention to the Mandarin dialect. A thorough knowledge of the books I deem indispensable to an efficient missionary. This will not only enable him to meet the Chinese on their own ground, but will infallibly give him a position and command a hearing.

'During the last twelve months I have made repeated journeys into the interior, one of the most interesting of which was to Su-Cheu in company with Mr. Edkins. Su-Cheu is regarded by the Chinese as one of their most beautiful and richest cities. They say "that to be happy on earth, one must be born in Su-Cheu, live in Canton, and die in Tien-Cheu; for in the first are the handsomest people, in the second the richest luxuries, and in the third the best coffins." The walls of the city are twelve miles in circumference, and the whole population about one million and a half. It lies north-west of Shanghai, the way lying through a succession of villages and cities. No foreigner had

visited this city undisguised. We were anxiou
make the attempt. No sooner, however, had we
within the gates than we were met by an official,
very politely entreated us to walk into his house
be seated. In about two minutes another official,
higher rank, came in to visit us. We were as
Whence we came? whither we were going? v
might be our object? etc. etc. Having replied
informed us that he could not permit us to pro
into the city, and that it was contrary to tr
contrary to custom, and contrary to everything
foreigners to come so far from Shanghai. After
had remonstrated with him, he said, "Well, you ca
go in through this gate, you better try another."

'Seeing it was useless to persist, we returned to
boat. Then we resolved to try and enter by a w
gate. We ordered our boatmen to that effect,
fortunately got in safely, though I must con
clandestinely. We left the boat, walked about
every direction, visited some of the chief place
attraction, preached to a large number of people,
then returned to our boat well pleased with our suc
Our presence, as might be expected, excited m
curiosity, but I am happy to say that we were no
the least molested, nor, so far as I remember, e
insulted.

'On the following day, being emboldened by
former day's success, we determined to enter the v
heart of the city with books; we got in and distribu
several hundred copies of the New Testament.

'I look back on these two days with much plea

and satisfaction. In this attempt something has been done towards the breaking down of that barrier between the Chinese and foreigners, and the opening up of the country for the free and general distribution of the Word of God and the proclamation of the Gospel of Peace.

'When at home I have been going daily to either of the two chapels to preach. My audiences vary very much both in number and character. Generally I have had to speak on without interruption; occasionally, however, I have had fiery discussions. I often invite discussion, for the obvious reason that it is an excellent way of explaining, adapting, and enforcing the truths that we have to teach. Our theses are generally such as the following—the existence of God; the origin of things; God's moral government; salvation in Christ; the superiority of Christianity; the future state; the origin, nature, and destiny of man. Every inch of ground is stoutly contested, sometimes with considerable point and force by our opponent.

'I have only just returned from a missionary tour, which I took in company with Mr. Muirhead. Our method of operation was somewhat different to that which is generally adopted. We spent the greater part of our time in going from house to house and speaking to each face to face of the way of salvation. We were received very kindly by all. I don't remember being repulsed by more than one, who told me that he was a Confucian and did not want to hear what we had to say. I intend giving myself up to this work during the whole of the ensuing winter.'

CHAPTER IV

IN JOURNEYINGS OFT

IT is not surprising that missionaries are often a great perplexity and puzzle to the official mind, especially to the unsympathetic official who knows nothing of the mystery of that Divine passion for the souls of men which possesses and directs those whose hearts the Lord has touched.

By the Treaty of Nanking the right was given to foreigners to reside in five ports and to carry on their various callings in them; but they were not allowed to reside anywhere else in the country, and their excursions beyond the bounds of the five cities were limited to a single day. The missionaries very early began to go beyond the prescribed limits in their work of itineration; and though at first they excited a good deal of hostile curiosity, which expressed itself in stone-throwing and other acts of violence, they found that, as the people got to know them better, they were, as a rule, friendly and interested, and that they placed no obstacles in the way of missionaries settling amongst them. The result was that out-stations began to be established, the missionary journeys went farther and grew more adventurous, whilst more than one missionary

settled for longer or shorter periods in inland cities before the right to do so was conceded.

Griffith John has throughout his missionary career shown an eager willingness to press on to new enterprises. This he has done, not in the restlessness of a shallow nature which soon tires of steady work and wants some fresh excitement, but because he has always been filled with an intense longing to carry the light and healing of the Gospel to the myriads still in the darkness and sorrow of heathenism. From 1858 to 1861 his time was very largely spent outside of Shanghai. He stayed for several months at Ping-hu (now known in missionary reports as Bing-oo), a city about seventy miles from Shanghai. He had visions of settlement at Hang-chow, and he made several long and remarkable journeys in company with one or other of his colleagues. Amongst these journeys were two of a very exceptional character, in which he visited the headquarters of the T'ai-p'ing rebels at Nanking. His letters to his friend Mr. Jacob and to the Mission House were full of references to his burning desire not to build on other men's foundations, but to be permitted and used of God to carry the Gospel to those who had not heard it. The work of this period has been summed up by him as follows :—

'I made many tours into the interior for missionary purposes. There are not many places in all the regions round about Shanghai which I did not visit again and again, and in whose streets I did not preach. I did much work also in Che-kiang, as well as in Kiang-su, and such cities as Su-Chow, Sung-kiong, Ping-hu,

Hu-Chow, Kia-ting, and Hang-Chow were as familiar to me as Shanghai itself.

'In 1858 I made a missionary tour, accompanied by Mr. Muirhead, in the direction of the Yellow River. This was looked upon at that time as a very remarkable journey for its length and daring. I lived for some time with my family at Ping-hu, a city distant from Shanghai about seventy miles. Mr. and Mrs. Williamson took up their abode at Sung-kiong, a city thirty miles distant from Shanghai, about the same time. These, I believe, were the first two cities taken possession of by missionaries and their families in the interior, and had Mr. Williamson and myself felt inclined to set up for ourselves, we might have called our Mission *The China Inland Mission*, thus anticipating by some years the magnificent Mission which now goes by that name! I planted several out-stations in the cities and towns around Shanghai, and opened the first preaching hall ever opened in Su-Chow, one of the largest and wealthiest cities in the Empire. All these stations, however, were broken up in connection with the subsequent movements of the T'ai-p'ing rebels. To me this was a source of great grief; for I bestowed much labour upon them, and felt a deep interest in many of the converts connected with them. But this first period of my missionary life was about to close.'

In a letter written on March 11, 1858, Griffith John gives expression to his ideas about missionary work, and the hopes and desires he cherished, as follows:—

'I intend, as soon as possible, to proceed to Hang-Chow, the Athens of China, which is only 150 miles

from Shanghai. . . . There, if seconded by subscriptions from home, I will establish an institution for the teaching of native ministers. The longer I stay in China the more I am convinced that her people are to be converted, if ever, by the means of native teachers. What I should like to have is an institution for the education of Christian men who have given some proof of piety and zeal, and to have them under my influence for one or two years, during which period they should go through a course of education similar in character to that of our colleges at home, minus classics. Being prepared for the work, I would fix them down here and there through the country and exercise a kind of general superintendence over them. I should like to work for China, and not to confine my labours to some one particular district, and I don't know of a better way than the above.'

A fortnight later he started for Ping-hu, taking with him Mrs. John and their little boy. An account written some time afterwards of a later visit to the same place gives a graphic picture of the means of transport:—

'The mode of conveyance into the interior of China depends very much on the region through which one may have to go. By far the most convenient is that of water. All the principal rivers and lakes are connected by means of artificial canals which have been dug by the Chinese in every direction and which run like veins and arteries through almost every part of the Empire. Nearly every city, town, and village is accessible to a boat. The canals at intervals of various lengths are spanned by bridges of one or more arches; the bridges vary in height from ten to twenty feet. A

boat must have its mast hauled down to pass under. On April 28 we started in our boat. Our boat was about twenty-five feet long by six broad, the whole of which space (with the exception of four or five feet forward and six or eight astern, left open for the purpose of enabling people to work) was closed and partitioned off in the following manner:—

'First comes the outer cabin, which opens in front and has a door behind leading into the central compartment; that is furnished with windows on each side for the admission of light and air, and seats on which one may comfortably rest or sit; it forms a neat vestibule for the reception of visitors. The central cabin is higher, broader, longer, and in every way more comfortable than the former; it is furnished with two windows on each side, sometimes made of glass, sometimes of thin oyster-shell. It has a bed-place at the farther end, seats all round, and a table in the midst; here the passenger may sleep, work, eat, whilst the boat is under weigh. Astern of the central cabin is a small berth a few feet wide, where your servant may sleep in the night and cook in the day.

'Abaft there is an open space covered in by a mat, where the men stand to scull the boat. The sculls are very powerful instruments worked on a pivot fixed into the stern of the boat, which being slightly bent, the boatmen are enabled to give the scull a spiral curved motion in the water by means of which the boat is propelled. A rope is fastened from the end of the scull to the deck, by working which the scull is turned half round, while one or two other men, grasping the



scull in the hand, move it backwards and forwards. The boats are furnished with a curiously shaped mast, fitted on a cross piece of timber, passing over the top of the central cabin by means of two hinges, which admit of the mast being easily lowered abaft whenever the boat has to pass under bridges. The mast itself is double, rising up from either end of the cross-beam just alluded to, and meeting in a point at the top. By means of a rope it is easily lowered and raised. A second and smaller one works in the larger one, and is raised occasionally for the purpose of towing the boat. Such then was our boat. We started about one o'clock, but on account of a strong headwind got only 36 li or about 12 miles from Shanghai that day. We anchored at a place called Tsen-pu-dong, a very noisy and uncomfortable port.

'Early the next morning we were off again, passed a town called Ming-say, 76 li from Shanghai, before I had got up. About eight o'clock we found ourselves opposite the departmental city of Sung-kiong. By and by we came to the neighbourhood of the silk country. Each side of the river was lined with the mulberry tree, whose fine broad green leaf was exceedingly pleasant to the eye. In the evening, about eight o'clock, we arrived at Ping-hu. When we got alongside some of the boats at anchor, a man stepped out of one and asked our boatmen if we were peacefully disposed. On being assured that all was right, he returned, wishing us good-night.'

The next two letters were dated from this place. Under date of April 13, 1858, Griffith John wrote:—

'I don't write from Shanghai, as on former occasions, but from Ping-hu, which is upwards of seventy miles from Shanghai. Mrs. John, the boy, and myself left Shanghai on March 29, and arrived here on the 31st. We have rented a house outside the city, and intend staying here for some months, unless sent away by the Mandarin, or compelled to leave on account of some other unforeseen circumstance. We have been here nearly two weeks, and they have been my happiest in China. I am now in my element, and do my work from the early morning till the late evening with a cheerful spirit and a buoyant heart. The morning I spend in studying with my teacher, and the whole afternoon in preaching in a large hall downstairs. My native assistant and self keep on preaching every other day from about two o'clock till about five. We get excellent congregations, and generally very attentive ones. In the evening I hold family worship with a goodly number of Chinese, about fifteen altogether.

'God has been pleased to smile already on our efforts. We have six catechumens who profess a decided belief of the truth, and are now under a course of instruction preparatory to their admission into the Church. May God grant them grace to persevere unto the end! There are others who seem to be touched by the truth. Give me success, and my cup of joy will be full. Pray for us.

'Lord Elgin, and the French, Russian, and American Ambassadors had arrived at Shanghai when I left. Lord Elgin intended to leave for Peking on Saturday

last. I daresay he is gone ere this. It is very questionable whether the Emperor will give them interviews. Lord Elgin, however, is determined to enforce his demands, cost what it may. I hope we are not going to have more fighting, and that the Emperor will wisely yield to their request to visit the capital. The Chinese have nothing like an adequate conception of our power and their own inferiority, and hence it is possible they may rush blindly into a deadly war with the Western Powers. Poor China, torn by intestine strife, and invaded by a terribly potent enemy from without, is in a very pitiable condition.'

A month later, on May 21, he wrote again :—

'Our residence in the country we enjoy most thoroughly. The people seem quite pleased with our presence, and kind in their way. We have not been left without some indication of God's approbation. I think our coming to Ping-hu is of the Lord. We have excellent congregations daily in the afternoon. I open the doors at 2 P.M., and continue to preach to large and attentive audiences alternately with my native assistant till between 5 and 6. I have baptized six, and have several more in my catechumen class as candidates for baptism. I should like to establish a dozen or more stations in as many towns and cities over which I might exercise a kind of general superintendence. I think that staying at a place for some time until a nucleus of a church be formed is better and more satisfactory than paying flying visits to a large number of towns and cities. I don't intend making Ping-hu my resting-place. I hope to be able

to get to Hang-Chow as soon as possible, and I should like to make that city the centre of my operations. Hang-Chow is the Athens of China, and in every respect such a place as a Welshman would delight to live at.'

While Griffith John and other missionaries were thus quietly pushing their way into the country, scattering broadcast Christian literature, preaching incessantly, disarming prejudice, and gathering in not a few converts, events were transpiring which were destined to make a very material and permanent change in the position of all foreigners in China.

The Treaty of Nanking in 1842 was a very remarkable concession to have obtained from China, and was, though she did not know it at the time, the beginning of a revolution in her relations with the world, the full fruit of which she has not yet reaped. The Treaty was, however, seriously defective in at least two very important respects; and it had no sooner been ratified than further friction arose. This resulted, in 1856, in a second war between Great Britain and China, of which it has been truly said that the lorcha 'Arrow' was only the occasion and not the cause. The Treaty of Tientsin was signed on July 26, 1858, and ratified by the signature of the Emperor at once. But the carrying out of its provisions, especially that relating to the rights of foreign Powers to have immediate access to the Court and the Emperor by the appointment of Ambassadors to reside in Peking, was not accomplished until 1860, and then only after an act of outrageous treachery by

the Chinese at the mouth of the Pei-ho river had resulted in the capture of the Taku forts by the Allies, and further severe fighting which ended in the capture of Peking itself.

This Treaty not only provided for the opening of *nine* additional ports as places of residence and trade; it also gave foreigners the right to travel and trade in any part of the Empire. Christianity, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, was to have toleration, and its professors were to be protected throughout China. The additional right of residence in other parts of China than the treaty ports was ultimately gained by Protestant missionaries, in consequence of the insertion of a clause in the Chinese copy of the Treaty with France by which 'it is, in addition, permitted to French missionaries to rent and purchase land in all the provinces, and to erect buildings thereon at pleasure.'

Griffith John at once saw the far-reaching possibilities involved in this Treaty, and the great charge it laid upon the Church of Christ in the opening for the evangelisation of China. On July 30, 1858, he wrote to Dr. Tidman:—

'The news which will reach you by this mail cannot but deeply interest all the friends of missions throughout the whole of Christendom. This vast and hoary Empire, in spite of her exclusive policy, inflated pride, and supreme contempt for all that is foreign, has been compelled, for the first time, to open up her hitherto impenetrable territory for amicable intercourse and honourable trade. The force of European power and character has been wholesomely felt, and the superior

science of the heretofore despised barbarian is beginning to be acknowledged in many quarters. China no longer, even in her own eyes, occupies her assumed unapproachable pre-eminence among the nations of the earth. No longer can she look down from her lofty aerial throne with disdain and commiseration upon those insects of mankind who have unfortunately been born beyond the boundaries of the Flowery Land. The sphere is broken, her pride is considerably humbled, her high and haughty looks are being pulled down, and her true character and condition are beginning to be revealed to her hitherto slumbering consciousness. By the Nanking Treaty the five ports were thrown open to British trade and residence. This was thought then to be an important step in advance, and of incalculable benefit in a commercial and religious point of view. The interior of the country, however, was still sealed to the personal presence of the foreigner, and her magnificent rivers barred up against his approach. He was still deemed too defiled to tread on the sacred soil of the Middle Kingdom, and too degraded to mingle with her heaven-born sons.

'Since 1842 there has been going on in the Chinese mind a gradual and important change; and this change has been brought about principally by the devoted missionary under the blessing of God. That class of men, whose very existence our plenipotentiary in 1842 ignored, have been the chief means in removing Chinese prejudice to the extent it has been removed, and in creating confidence and esteem in the Chinese mind. By their books, their preaching, their deeds of

benevolence and consistent Christian deportment, they have done much towards placing their respective nations in a proper and favourable light. At some of the ports they have penetrated the forbidden land in every direction, dwelt for months among the people, and have visited several of the most populous and celebrated cities, denouncing their superstitions and idolatry, and calling upon their self-righteous inhabitants to repent and believe. It is true that in their first attempts they had to encounter the frowns of many, and were in one or two cases maltreated; but further acquaintance removed all opposition, and now they meet nothing but smiles and goodwill.

'I will mention a fact which will illustrate what I have stated. I have been residing for about four months at the city of Ping-hu, which is about 200 li from Shanghai. My teacher went to a person who had been in the habit of attending my preaching, to borrow money. "No," said the man in reply, "I will not lend you; but if the foreign teacher wants any I will gladly lend him, because I know he is an honest man." When, a short time after this, circumstances compelled me to test his sincerity, he advanced all that was asked, and said he would lend more most willingly if needed.

'But the country around Shanghai and Ningpo has been gradually yet steadily opening up to missionary operations through the persevering efforts of missionaries. Yet we thank God, who has been pleased in His inscrutable providence to bring about in a day what we thought tens of years, if not centuries, would be required to accomplish.

'Thus China has been opened almost unexpectedly to the missionary, the merchant, and the man of science. The country is virtually in our hands, and it will be the fault of the missionaries who are already on the field, and the churches at home, if they don't take possession of the land, and gain a permanent footing in the very heart of each of the eighteen provinces. There are many obstacles in the way and many difficulties to be encountered. It is one thing to have a good treaty, and another thing to carry its provisions into effect. But that patience that refuses to be conquered, that diligence that never tires, that caution that always trembles, which were some of the finest traits in the character of the first Protestant apostle to the Chinese, joined with the indomitable courage and gigantic energy of a Medhurst, will, under the blessing of God, bid all hostile circumstances cease their opposition and surrender.

'To carry on our work efficiently in China we need two things. We need a good staff of native agents and a large reinforcement from home. It is a growing conviction among the missionaries here, that if China is to be evangelised and converted, it must be through the instrumentality of native evangelists. It will be impossible for the various missionary societies of Europe and America to send out men in sufficient numbers to supply the wants of the millions of China. But native assistants should be well instructed, so as to be able to teach and defend the truth; they should have a thorough head and heart training ere they are sent forth among their countrymen. The Roman

Catholics have an institution in China for this very purpose, and, through the native assistants who are taught in it, they are able to exercise a powerful influence on the whole of the country. It is very important that we should have a similar institution. I trust the Directors will give to this subject due consideration.

'Native agents, however, will not do alone. Let them be ever so pious, devoted, and active, they almost invariably lack prudence and method. A foreign teacher is essential to lead and superintend. For aught we see at present, China for ages yet to come will not be able to dispense with the guiding hand of the foreign missionary.

'I rejoice to learn that the Directors are prepared to adopt measures for the purpose of increasing the number of their Chinese missionaries. May God raise up men of burning zeal, deep piety, and ardent love! The teas, the silks, and the cotton of China will doubtless wean many a merchant from the joys of home and the charms of his native land. Her towering mountains, wide spread plains, placid lakes, magnificent rivers and lovely landscapes, will attract and allure the lover of science and nature. But, oh, will not her four hundred millions of immortal souls, who perish for the lack of that knowledge which every student in our colleges possesses, for that bread of life which they have so freely partaken of, induce many a God-fearing and a God-loving young man to say, "Here am I, send me"?'

In a letter written to Mr. Jacob a fortnight later,

after describing the change which had already taken place in the attitude of the officials, Griffith John says :—

'The country is in our hands, and it will be our fault if we don't gain a permanent footing in the very heart of each province. The seals have been broken, and a wide door has been flung open to the Christian Church. May God be pleased to raise up men of burning zeal, intense devotion, and deep piety for this land!

'I am anxious to get far into the interior as soon as possible. Where Providence may lead me, I don't know.'

It was not very long before he gave practical effect to this resolve to get away into the interior. In the beginning of October we find him starting from Shanghai on a long and adventurous trip along the Grand Canal. He sent a very interesting account of this trip to the London Missionary Society on his return. In it he said :—

'In company with my friend Mr. Lea, from Amoy, and two other missionaries, I left Shanghai on October 5, 1858, with the view of visiting all the cities and towns along the banks of the Grand Canal as far as the Yellow River. Most of these towns had never been visited by a Protestant missionary. On account of the exclusive policy of the Government, no foreigners had been able *openly* to journey on this route far beyond Su-Chow. In subordination to our primary object, viz. that of preaching and distributing books, we were anxious to ascertain what changes had been wrought by the important event which had just transpired, and

how far the country in this direction was open to missionary operations.

'We found ourselves the next morning sailing along the Grand Canal. This canal is 650 miles in length, and is divided into three parts, which were constructed by three different dynasties. By means of it, and the rivers which flow into it, an almost entire water communication is completed across the country from Peking to Canton. Between the Yellow River and the Yang-tse, it is carried over an artificial mound of earth kept together by walls of stone, upon the stability of which the safety of several towns and cities depends. Though not to be compared as a work of art with canals existing in the West, yet, even to this day, there is no work in Asia which can compare with it, and when first completed there was none equal to it in the world.

'On the canal there are dozens of custom-houses, whose principal object seems to be to spy out and apprehend suspicious characters. The most formidable of these is Hütz-Gwan, about ten miles beyond Su-Chow. Travellers have been in the habit of avoiding it by taking a circuitous route, and the few who have had the audacity to attempt it have been summarily turned back. On this occasion, however, no sooner was the presence of our Western barbarians made known than the boat which lies across the river was swung round and a highway opened before us. Immediately after passing another custom-house at the other end of the town, one of the officials stepped out, crying at the very pitch of his voice, "Stop!

what boat is that? Who have you inside?" He was told that they were foreigners from Shanghai. "Are they merchants? Have they any merchandise?" "No," said I, "we are preachers; our only object is to preach and distribute books." The hearing his own language spoken seemed to conciliate and excite confidence. Having written our names and given away a few books, we were allowed to proceed in peace. Thus, what would have been impossible two years ago, was accomplished with the most perfect ease at this time.

'We next came to Chang-chow-fu, the present residence of the Governor-General. This is a large and populous city. Marco Polo mentions it as one of those he called at on his way from Kam-balu, or Peking, and speaks of it as being then "a great and noble city." Rice is grown here in abundance, and the celebrated green dye tree seems to be largely cultivated. Here again we found our course interrupted by a strong chain drawn across the canal. The custom-house people were thrown into a state of utter consternation by our sudden appearance, and hardly knew what to do or say when they learnt that it was our intention to cross the Yang-tse. After much questioning and talking we were distinctly told that we must not proceed further that night. Evidently they wished to learn the mind of their superiors in the city before acting either in the one way or the other.

'Early on the following morning the chain was removed and our boats permitted to pass on. The chief man would have us believe that he was deeply

concerned for our safety; that in these troublesome times it would be dangerous to travel by night; and hence the reason why we were detained till the morning. No sooner did we arrive at the next city, Tan-Yang, than two military Mandarins came on board our boat to inquire into our character and object. They examined our books very minutely and said, "We perceive your object is to exhort the people to turn from the bad and follow the good." Then we had a long conversation on the state of the country in general and the doings of the rebels in particular. We were told that the whole country beyond the river was in commotion, and that large and important cities were in hourly danger of falling into the hands of the Nichfei or Filchers. In vain did they bring to bear upon us all the force of Chinese logic and eloquence for the purpose of inducing us to return. They were distinctly told that we were determined to proceed on our journey until we found further progress impossible.

'On the morning of the following day, which was the Sabbath, the literary Mandarin came in full state, attended by a large retinue, to pay his compliments. He was very affable and communicative. He told us that we might proceed on the following morning, and that he would send a boat along with us to the next station, both to accompany and protect us. After he had left we had an English service in the open air. Probably this was the first time that prayer had been offered up to the true God from this spot and His praises sung. The soil seemed more sacred and the heavens more divine, the former having been hallowed

by the special presence of the Almighty, and the latter by the heartfelt sigh of His humble servants on behalf of the perishing millions of China. The expansive heavens above, the rich soil spread out before us, the lofty hills towering in the distance, together with the profound stillness of nature, all conspired to impress us solemnly with the majesty and loveliness of the Deity whom we were adoring—an hour, this, never to be forgotten. In the morning and afternoon my native assistant and myself preached to large congregations. The people were remarkably quiet and docile.

'Late in the afternoon our Mandarin friend sent us a large present of cakes and dishes prepared in the highest style of the Chinese culinary art. Next morning we sent him our cards, with a present of books and some foreign articles that we had brought with us. Dr. Hobson's medical and scientific works took his fancy mightily, as well as that of others, to whom copies were presented. After this he sent us another present of tea, dates, and cakes. Thus we were treated by these officials very cordially and on terms of perfect equality.

'At Tan-du we had an opportunity of preaching and distributing a goodly number of books. The people here are very quiet and inoffensive. Of course, they called us devils, white devils, and foreign devils, but it means nothing on the lips of the *common* people in this part of the country; they don't seem to know what else to call us. As I was passing along, giving away books at this place, I heard one woman saying to her companion who was standing by, "Behold!

there is a little devil." "Yes," said the other, "he is a real devil"; that is, he is a devil or a foreigner, and not a long-haired rebel. The military Mandarin of Tan-du, as well as Tan-Yang, came to visit us, and treated us very kindly.

'In returning, we took a south-westerly course, and preached in several cities which had never been visited before. On our way home we called at the populous city of Su-Chow. It is interesting to witness the great change which has been going on here since Mr. Edkins and myself visited the place, about a year and a half ago. Then we could not enter the city but clandestinely, and were turned back when we attempted it openly. At present Su-Chow, with its nearly two millions of human beings, is just as open as any of the cities in the immediate neighbourhood of Shanghai.

'At the beautiful city of Hang-Chow, *The Earthly Paradise*, according to the Chinese saying, Mr. Lea and myself spent four days. We entered the city openly, preached daily, and distributed books freely, without hindrance. Not long since, a missionary, who ventured to defile this sacred soil with his polluted feet, was summoned before the Mandarin, and sent back to Shanghai under an escort. On this occasion no one *in authority* asked us whence we were, whither we were going, or what was our object.'

Two brief trips of a special character were undertaken early in 1859, the report of which is made extremely interesting by descriptions of what the traveller saw:—

'On the 21st March I left Shanghai for Kwun-

Shan and Su-Chow. As the departmental examination was being held at Kwun-Shan at the time, I took with me 2500 copies of the New Testament, 500 copies of the complete Bible, and a large number of tracts. From the beginning to the end of the examination there were no less than 10,000 students. Among them were two of the members of our Church, both of whose names stood high on the list. Mr. River, who is our most efficient native agent, and withal a very humble-minded Christian, came off with flying colours. It was pleasing to observe on his return to Shanghai how little he was elated with his late success. He seemed to feel more than ever the hollowness of those honours which flow from fame-seeking, and the dimness of all earthly glory compared with the glory which shall be revealed to the children of God. Among the students there were many fine, intellectual, mentally and physically robust-looking men. None of them, however, seemed to look beyond the present world. Fame is as the goal of their highest ambition; this absorbs all their energies, and is pursued with supreme earnestness. Whilst they received me very courteously, they treated my message with perfect indifference. To them the doctrine of human depravity was rank heterodoxy; the doctrine of the Cross foolishness; and that of future rewards and punishments an idle tale. Many of them received our books and promised to read them.

'From Kwun-Shan we proceeded to Su-Chow, where I spent some days in preaching and distributing books. At the Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian temples a

person may preach every afternoon to audiences of hundreds and sometimes thousands. At these points the citizens assemble daily to enjoy a quiet cup of tea, and a talk over the news of the day. The moment a foreigner makes his appearance, up goes the shout, "The white devil is come!" The chat, however interesting, is immediately broken up; the highly flavoured tea is unhesitatingly forsaken; and the missionary in less than five minutes is surrounded by hundreds of gazing citizens. You will be pleased to learn that we have been enabled to establish a station in the very heart of this populous city. On February 10, 1858, I left Shanghai with the view of trying to get a house at Su-Chow, where I might stay two or three months with a native agent, and fairly commence the work. It was in vain we tried to induce any one to let his house to a foreign teacher. They had no objection to a foreigner as such, but dreaded the consequences of doing so without the permission of the Mandarin. Though I failed to secure a place for myself, I had no difficulty in getting a place for the native assistant where he might preach and meet inquirers.

'On my present visit I was cheered with the fact that a few had been brought under religious instruction, and that they were assembling on the Lord's day to read God's word and sing His praises. They had already made considerable progress in the knowledge of the truth, and they resolved to make a public profession of their faith as soon as I should think them fit.

'I visited Hang-Chow with 4000 copies of the New Testament. This city is justly celebrated for the vastness of its size, the loveliness of its situation, the beauty of the surrounding scenery, the number and magnificence of its monasteries, and the urbanity of its citizens. To the Chinese student Hang-Chow is classic ground. It is interesting to observe how a Chinaman's pale cheek will begin to glow and his eyes dance as he mutters some fine classical passages that are suggested to his mind by the varied objects that attract his attention. Almost every spot has been consecrated by the richest effusions of the Oriental muse.

'I arrived just in time to witness the annual celebration of Kwan-jin's birthday. One of her most famous temples is that of Yien-Shuh at Hang-Chow. During this festival, which commenced on the 19th of the second moon and continues for fifty days, thousands go from all parts of Che-kiang and the neighbouring provinces to offer at this shrine. Long ere the smiling morn has tipped the surrounding hills with gold, the priests (of whom there are about 500 belonging to this monastery) may be heard chanting their orisons, and this is continued to the depths of the still night. Candles burn incessantly on the altar, and clouds of incense continue to ascend.

'On my way home from the temple I met a man with a large serpent lying over his shoulder. I asked him what was his object in carrying that loathsome creature about?

'"To sell it," was the answer.

'"What could a person do with it were he to buy it?"

'"Oh," said he, "he might accumulate a vast amount of merit by releasing it from its present misery."

'"But what merit would there be in saving the life of such a beast as that?"

'"It has," said he, "a human soul just like yourself, and hence it would be an act of great merit to save it."

'Then I learned that on these festival occasions it is common for those of the baser sort to turn the doctrine of metempsychosis to their pecuniary advantage. They catch serpents and other noxious creatures to sell; and many of the most devout buy them and let them go, sincerely believing that by so doing they may be releasing a deceased relative or a dear old friend from present misery, and possible death.

'The Sing-yun Monastery is the largest at Hang-Chow, and is of magnificent dimensions. At the entrance there is an inscription stating that the worshipper here is only a foot from the Western Heaven —the spirit home of the devout Buddhist. In the rock around the temple hundreds of figures are cut, representing Boddhisattwas, Devas, and other divinities. I was led by a priest into a cave in which he pointed out an aperture admitting a ray of light from the top. The cave on this account is called "the cave into which one thread of light enters." The priest told me that if I would only look up I should behold the smiling face of Buddha. I looked and stared, but to no purpose; I suppose my faith was not quite strong enough. My teacher, however, though a very sensible man and acquainted with the Christian doctrine, was

rather inclined to believe that he saw something very much like his face.

'One of the priests received me very cordially and showed me all that was to be seen. He led me into one hall containing 500 life-sized gilt figures representing disciples of Buddha who are delivered from metempsychosis. Among them were the deceased emperors of the present dynasty. The hall is a fine large building, with lights so arranged as to present each row in clear view.

'In the great Buddha Monastery an immense image of Buddha is cut out of solid rock, measuring 48 feet from shoulder to shoulder. The nose is 7 feet long, and the other parts are of proportional size. At the Chau-king Monastery I witnessed for the first time an examination of candidates for the priesthood. They were twenty-two in number, and, like most of the Buddhist priests of the present day, looked the picture of inanity. The public examination consisted in going through a few chants, genuflections, prostrations, and in answering a few questions. They all passed their examinations creditably, and were to be ordained on the 7th of the fourth moon. They are set apart by burning half-a-dozen or more dents on the fore-part of their shaven heads. The abbot takes as many sticks of burning incense as there are marks to be made, and places them on the head of the candidate so as to form a square or an oblong. These are left to burn into the skin, and thus the dents are made. He is now a Bikshu or a Mendicant, because he begs food for the body and instruction for the mind. He is very proud

of these marks on his head, as proofs that he is no longer a laic, but a consecrated person, and as such entitled to all the privileges of the Order. On my way home to Shanghai I met others who had just received ordination at Sung-hwo Monastery, not far from Shanghai. I was told that an unusual number had entered the priesthood this year.'

It must have been in April 1859 that Griffith John paid that second visit to Ping-hu from the account of which a description of the mode of travelling has already been quoted. The story of this trip contains the first definite statement in his correspondence regarding the prevalence of and the injury which was being done in the country by opium-smoking. The statement is important on several grounds.

'At Ko-pu I paid a visit to an old priest who had very kindly a year ago permitted me to sleep in the temple. I took Mrs. John to see my old domicile, which I found occupied by three Chinamen. Among other articles that were lying about was an opium pipe, lamp, etc., which proved that they were opium-smokers. I remonstrated with them, but to no purpose.

'This opium-smoking is the curse of China. The emaciated and ghastly appearance of these poor creatures is heart-sickening. The Chinese, though quick, are wanting in moral courage; they fall almost without exception into this strong temptation. From the Emperor, through all ranks and positions, down to the very poorest beggar, this pernicious habit is

practised. The Emperor himself is reported to be an opium-smoker, and so was his predecessor Tan-Quong. The Mandarins smoke perhaps more than any other class of the community. Ten or fifteen years ago no one dare smoke publicly; he had to steal his whiff in locked-up room or in a dark cell. This was not only the effect of fear, but also shame; the opium-smoker was regarded not only as a violator of the law of his country, but also as low, base, a self-murderer, and undutiful. The stigma with which he was branded by his fellow-countrymen was the most powerful means to check its progress.

'But notwithstanding all this, the practice has made rapid strides; at present shops are opened in broad daylight in every street, and are frequented from the early morning till the late evening. The shame is taken away by the universality of the practice. The opium habit is one of the greatest barriers to the progress of the Gospel in China. Though the Chinese have not the moral courage to withstand the temptation, yet they have the sagacity to perceive the inconsistency of a nation in presenting to them the word of life with the one hand, and a poisonous, life-destroying drug with the other. In reply to our appeals they often say, "Take away the opium first, and then we will believe in your sincerity." This is a fearfully black spot on our country. God grant that it may speedily be swept away.'

These excursions to places with which he was familiar, and where regular work had now been begun by the London Missionary Society Mission or by

others, were necessary for the purpose of encouraging native workers and helping forward the work. Two more long journeys which were undertaken avowedly for exploratory purposes belong to this period of his history. To use his own words :—

'I hope to be able to make one or two trips into the northern and western provinces for the purpose of fixing on one or two central points for missionary stations. It is the desire of my heart to labour in the regions beyond. It remains to be seen whether it is practicable or not. May the great Head of the Church guide us all and lead us where we may be most useful in promoting His glory in the salvation of men.'

The *North China Herald* in July 1859 contained a long and interesting account of a trip to the Yellow River from the pen of Mr. John, the first of many contributions sent to that and other papers. In company with the Rev. William Muirhead, he went by boat up the Grand Canal as far as Tsing-kiang-fu, a city on the bank of the former bed of the Yellow River, upwards of 300 miles from Shanghai. The expedition was accomplished in perfect safety, and without any opposition or sign of hostility until they reached the farthest point. There they found themselves the object of no small concern and suspicion by the officials, and deemed it advisable to return. They preached and distributed books without hindrance everywhere, and had, with one exception, quiet and attentive audiences. The following extracts refer to the most striking experiences of the journey :—

'*June* 8.—We arrived early this morning at the district city of Kiang-yin. This city, which is situated on the southern bank of the Yang-tse, lies about a 100 li to the north of Wu-sih. The departmental examination being held here, we were anxious to visit the place with copies of the Scriptures and other Christian books. From the beginning to the end of the examination no less than 3000 students were expected to attend. After speaking for a length of time to a large number of literati, one of them became very much excited. His face coloured up, and his whole frame began to assume a threatening attitude. Taking no notice of what he said or did, I walked quietly away at the end of my discourse. By and by I heard a good deal of noise behind me, and, turning around, I saw my friend with two or three more doing their utmost to excite the ire of the populace. I tried to pacify them, but to no purpose; they grew more and more furious, and the ringleader, shutting his fist, threatened to strike.

'Having learnt from the experience of others that in such cases the least manifestation of fear is as dangerous as heedless temerity, I walked along very leisurely, leaving them to follow as long as they might think fit. Then they began to cry out that I was not a foreigner, but a long-haired rebel in disguise. I told them that I was an Englishman, which word, uttered with considerable emphasis, and I may say national pride, made some of them turn pale. There is magic power in this word. *Ego Romanus sum* never carried with it a greater moral force or a more profound meaning



A RIVERSIDE TOWN AND TYPICAL BOATS.

than "I am an Englishman" does at the present moment in China. One of the most excited, however, snatched my cap and examined it very minutely. Whilst my travelling companion, on account of his light hair, light eyes, and a somewhat ruddy countenance, is set down at the first glance for a *barbarian* of the first stamp, and, for aught I know, never imagined to be anything besides; I, on the contrary, on account of the opposite qualities, am sometimes suspected of being a *true*-born though degraded *Celestial*. I thought it prudent to inform the Mandarin of the facts of the case. He sent one of the Ya-men people instantly to inform me that strict orders had been sent to all the constables to see to it that foreigners were properly treated and in no way molested.

'We arrived early in the morning at the towns of Kwan-ling and Yein-kia-si. At both places the people were very quiet, and listened to what we had to tell them with much attention. At another town, Ki Kiang-si, I believe every man, woman, and child came out to have a look at us. They were greatly astonished to hear their own language spoken by foreigners. They were far too much excited, and intent upon gazing on our strange features and examining our still stranger-looking clothes, to understand much of our preaching. They will be better prepared for the next who may visit them.

'We reached the town of Hwang-kiow late in the evening, where we passed the night. Though late, our arrival was soon made known, and in a few minutes the opposite shore was lined with hundreds of anxious spectators.

'12.—Spent the morning in preaching at Kiang-yein. Among the thousands who crowded after us we observed many rich and well-educated looking men. The appearance of this people is vastly superior to that of those whom we had seen hitherto. This morning I had a long conversation with a Chinese colporteur. He is a native of Tan-tu in Chin-kiang-fu, where Buddhism is very flourishing. He is a respectable and quiet-looking man, and, as I have learnt since, of very honourable connections. Though not a priest, he seems very partial to Buddhism as well as Confucianism. Pitying the ignorance and wickedness of men, he is resolved to devote his time and talents to their enlightenment and renovation. For this purpose he is now travelling through this part of the country with a selection of books and tracts for general distribution. Some of these are Buddhist, some Tauist, and some Confucian. He presented me with seventeen copies on different subjects. Those are printed on the way as he goes along, and the expenses are defrayed by the literati and the rich, many of whom take considerable interest in his mission.

'I had a very pleasing conversation with him on board my boat; and was glad to meet one at least, even in China, who was earnestly seeking something to satisfy the higher cravings of his spiritual nature. He seemed to be quite conscious of the defectiveness of the existing religions, and listened with attention and apparent interest to the doctrine of life and immortality as propounded in the Gospel. I gave him a few copies of our books, which he commenced

reading immediately. He asked for a few more to give away to his friends. He also said that if he should get to love the doctrine of Jesus, he would immediately give up his present occupation and come to Shanghai for further instruction. On being asked what was his object in doing all this, he replied that he only wished to manifest his gratitude to Heaven and renovate the people. According to the light that he has, he is earnestly and devoutly striving to propitiate the favour of Heaven, and perfect himself in holiness; and because of this there is every reason to hope that the light which has just begun to dawn upon his mind will be welcomed with joy. I have some good grounds to believe that the advocates of the three religions are beginning to muster themselves to renewed efforts. More tracts and books are distributed, and a greater degree of attention is paid to public discourses, than formerly. I hope it is so. Christianity can lose nothing from opposition.

'17.—Being anxious to reach Tsing-kiang-fu as soon as possible, we passed Hwai-ngan without calling. The former place is only twenty-seven li from the latter, and we reached it early in the morning. Our arrival was soon found out, and thousands of the most boisterous and excited class were present in a moment. Deeming it both right and politic to inform the Mandarin of our arrival and intentions of proceeding beyond, we sent him our cards. By and by a military blue-button Mandarin came on board to inquire into our rank and object. He was very talkative and affable in his way. He invited us to come and take a

cup of tea at his "vile cottage." We consented to go along with him, and were only waiting his pleasure. We suggested, however, that it would be hardly safe to leave the boats without some one to take care of them.

'"Don't mind that," said he, "it will be all right"; and then he ordered chairs to be brought for us.

'But when our friend rose to go, to our surprise he turned around and said, "You had better not come." I suppose he expected us to decline his invitation, and was greatly disgusted with our bluntness in taking him at his word.

'He was followed by a host of white buttons sent from the different Ya-mens to make similar inquiries. No less than half-a-dozen came successively from the same Ya-men to ask precisely the same questions. Their object was to compare notes, and see whether the reports would tally. Two or three of the white buttons were ordered to remain on board our boats—ostensibly to protect us, but really to watch our movements. Two soldiers also were stationed on shore to keep the crowd in order. Being inclined to go as far as the bed of the Yellow River, we applied for chairs for that purpose. One of our guardians promised that our request would be complied with, but he must go first and mention it to the Ho-tai. The chairs at length appeared, and we were about starting when one of our friends requested us to wait a little while, until another message was sent to the Ho-tai. All at once the chairs disappeared, never to return again.

'Our patience having been tried for about six hours, and feeling that it was now nearly exhausted, we made



up our minds to take a decisive step. We asked them whether we were going to have chairs or no. They replied that, as it was getting to be late, we had better wait till the morning, when chairs would be brought. Being disgusted with this piece of duplicity and stupid finesse, we told them that we would not wait any longer, but would walk it, and with this sprang on shore and made our way through the crowd with ease.

'This manœuvre, being altogether unexpected, took them by surprise; and, according to my teacher's account, the straightforwardness, fearlessness, and original powers of foreigners became the themes of conversation during our absence. Ere we had proceeded two hundred yards, two white buttons, accompanied by a couple of strong, reckless-looking fellows, were at our heels, and did good service in clearing up the way and keeping the crowd back. We soon reached the deserted bed of the Yellow River, and found it sure enough as the Chinese say, "as dry as dust." We did not only cross it dry-shod, but converted it into a temporary pulpit. Where but a few years ago the turbid waters of the Hwang rolled majestically—the common dread of the inhabitants of the plain—there now cottages are built, gardens are planted, carriages pass to and fro, the grass is beginning to grow, and sheep are browsing at their ease. Here and there pools of water may be seen, but no continued stream. At this place the bed is nearly as high as the banks, and the surface deposit is of the very finest sand.

'*June* 18.—This morning we found ourselves under

a guard. In front of our boat lie two others containing half-a-dozen or more soldiers, and a tent was pitched on shore. We had told our friends on the former evening that we would feel thankful for a mule or an ass or anything else this morning, as we wished to see a little more of the bed of the river. They promised to make our request known to the great man, as they could not bring them without his permission. As they were not forthcoming, we resolved to walk to the place where the canal crosses the river. No sooner had we started than three or four soldiers, followed by a white button, were after us. We found ourselves under a complete system of espionage until we reached the boats again.

'None of the people were allowed to have any intercourse with us, or to convey the least information. When any one would attempt to answer our questions, he was ordered to shut his mouth immediately. Occasionally one of them would run ahead, evidently for the purpose of preventing the people having anything to do with us.'

The travellers had no sooner returned to Shanghai than they had a painful lesson of the impossibility of judging of the real state of feeling in China by appearances. The serious reverse suffered by the British forces at the mouth of the Pei-ho River and the consequent outbreak of hostilities was speedily known, not only in Shanghai but throughout the country, and the result was seen in a marked change of demeanour and conduct towards foreigners. Moreover, the opportunity was made use of by the Chinese



officials for a special attack upon missionaries and their converts. It seemed for the time as if all the country work of all the missions, much of which had appeared to be full of promise, must come to an end. The following letter tells of the trouble as it broke out in Shanghai :—

'SHANGHAI, *September* 3, 1859.

'Since my last to you, events have transpired by which our present position and future prospects have been materially modified. Then our hearts were glowing with the immediate prospect of being able to penetrate this hitherto sealed-up country without restraint. Little did we think then that a dark and portentous cloud was gathering, and that our sky was so soon to be overcast. The defeat sustained by our forces on the Pei-ho on the 25th June, has had a most pernicious effect upon the mind of the people at large. They imagine now that our future stay hangs upon their good-will and pleasure. The people, who but three months ago were as harmless as doves and very respectful, are now as bold as lions and often intolerably impudent. The courage with which they have been inspired by our defeat is very manifest in a late outbreak, of which, I believe, you have already been informed.

'The story that foreigners were engaged in the work of kidnapping the Chinese is, I believe, a fabrication from beginning to end, and was got up by certain individuals to excite the ire of the populace and to justify the atrocious deeds which they

perpetrated. That the French ship "Gertrude" was at Woo-sung shipping coolies for the Havana, and that some Chinamen were drowned and shot in their attempt to escape, is true; but that any had been taken on board forcibly, by either foreigner or the Chinese themselves, is a rumour for the truth of which there is not the faintest semblance of evidence. Of the one hundred and fifty or thereabouts that were landed from the "Gertrude" and examined by the Tao-tai, not a single case of kidnapping has been discovered. I have not met either a foreigner or a Chinaman who has seen anything of the kind, and those who, at the commencement of the commotion, testified that they had seen with their own eyes, now recall their words and say that they only heard.

'The worst feature in the whole is that the people associate the coolie trade and the imaginary work of kidnapping with the Christ-religion. Such will appear evident from the following very violent manifesto which was posted at Su-Cheu. It bears date the 30th July, the day on which one foreigner was murdered, and two others wounded near the foreign settlement:—

'"The Intendant and Magistrate have issued notifications at Shanghai to the effect that foreigners with hearts of wolves are in the habit of coming to the towns and villages, where, acting in concert with natives professing their doctrine, they make a show of hiring people to assist them, their real purpose being to entrap men to their perdition. Hateful and detestable beings! Of a truth all natives professing their doctrines are devils, are demons. Now, lest the simple

people in their greed of gain be beguiled in this way, let the people of the towns and villages with joint effort and united heart set upon and kill every foreigner that is associated with natives professing his doctrine in the teaching of religion, that the kidnapping of men may be put a stop to."

'In a memorial presented to the Emperor by the Censor, Yin Yan-Yung, he states that it is under the cover of the preaching and charities of missionaries the English barbarians eat their way into little states. Here in Shanghai a number of placards have been posted up denouncing the religion of Jesus, exhorting the people not to enter the Church, and calling upon those who have already entered to repent and leave, ere it is too late.

'On the night of the 6th ultimo, about a hundred or a hundred and fifty men broke into our chapel in Shanghai and smashed everything into pieces, with the exception of a few benches. Then they proceeded into another, but ere they had finished the work of destruction there, the native soldiers were on the spot and the crowd was immediately dispersed. I have no doubt that they fully intended proceeding from chapel to chapel and doing to them all they so effectually did to ours. The only reason they assigned for their conduct was that the missionaries had returned into the city after a week's absence. I suppose they had made up their mind that we would not, or at least should not re-enter, and that the exclusive policy of the Cantonese was to be established at Shanghai. The damage done to our chapel is estimated at about

400 taels, which sum the Tao-tai has already advanced. It is now being repaired, and will be ready in about a month.

'Matters are quieting down at present, and we are able to carry our work on in the city as in former times. We have, however, to be very careful as to what we do or say, as the least provocation would be followed by another tremendous explosion. We have thought it advisable not to proceed beyond Shanghai for a season. I trust we shall soon see our way clear to resume our labours in the interior. The extensive sphere of our regular operations has been contracted to a point, and though it is now beginning to open up again, I fear it will be some time before we shall be able to go about so freely as we have been doing.

'I trust that the converts at the out-stations, though deprived of the assistance of the native agents, will continue to cleave unto the Lord.'

Fortunately the storm quieted down almost as quickly as it had risen, though it left an unpleasant groundswell of suspicion and sensitiveness. Writing to the same friend, March 6, 1860, Griffith John says:—

'You will be pleased to learn that peace and quietness have been restored to us in this part of the country, and that we are permitted once more to carry on our missionary work in safety. At one time our prospects were gloomy and uninviting; but God has been graciously pleased to interpose in our behalf; the clouds have been dispelled, and the threatening storm

has passed away, leaving but few traces of its existence behind. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitudes of the isles be glad thereof."

'Both alone, and in company with Mr. Edkins, I have made several short trips into the interior. Generally we have found the people respectful and attentive. In one place only have we been somewhat harshly treated, and even there the evil originated with a drunken man. The people, though quiet, are more excitable than they were before our defeat in the north, and the outbreak in Shanghai. It is much easier now than it was formerly to raise a tumult by means of an unguarded expression or action. There is also always some danger of meeting with ill-disposed persons, who watch for opportunities to put an end to the preaching and injure the preacher by exciting the ire of the hearers. More than once have I thought it prudent to pass on or bring my discourse absolutely to an end, in order to avoid coming into collision with such. Happily, however, the number of such is daily decreasing, so that we are able now to move about in almost perfect peace.

'The majority of our stations are prospering and giving us much satisfaction. The members at each are enjoying peace and quietness.

'At Su-Chow, Sung-Kiong, Ta-zang, Liu-Ka-hong, several have recently been admitted into the Church. Whilst there are some doubtful characters among our converts, there are not a few of whom we have every reason to hope that they have passed from darkness into light, and from death into life.

'You will be grieved to learn that the gates of Su-Chow are closed once more against the foreign missionary, and those of Hang-Chow against both foreign and native. When Mr. Edkins and myself visited Su-Chow about a month ago, we were positively refused admittance into the city. We were told that strict orders had been issued from the Mandarin office to the effect that no foreigner was to be allowed to enter the city without a direct permission from the Fu-tai. We did not think it advisable to apply for permission. Having encountered this repulse at the city gate, we turned our faces towards the suburbs. Here we preached without interruption from the officials, or annoyance on the part of the people. We spent two days among them preaching and distributing books and were convinced by the affability of the people that our exclusion from the city is not to be ascribed to any ill-will on their part, but is simply a Government policy. At that time the native assistants were not permitted to preach in the city, but they have written to us since stating that they are now allowed to do so. In Hang-Chow the case is worse. Even the native assistants have been driven away by the direct action of Government officials. The official order reads as follows:—

'"Li, Magistrate of the Tsientang district (Hang-Chow), commands the constables Tsien-hwai and Liu-tseuen to proceed together with all speed to the Tsien-tau alley, and order a Ningpo man named King-ling-yiu, and a Shaw-king man named Kung-Kwen-Yaou, residing in the house of one Fei, and

engaged in the gratuitous distribution of religious books, to quit the city. They are not to be allowed any further delay. You are moreover to order the said Fei on no account to permit their residence or to continue the lease of their lodgings. You are also to make careful inquisition whether there are any foreigners residing with them, and if there be, to expel all such from our jurisdiction. You the aforesaid messengers will beware of conniving at any the least delay on pain of punishment. Quick! Quick!

"Hienfung, 9th year, 11th month, 13th day, Dec. 6, '59."

'These native evangelists, whose only offence was the gratuitous distribution of religious books, petitioned the magistrate, but without effect; and the American missionaries at Ningpo, by whom they were sent, made a representation through the Tau-tai to the Governor-General of the province, but without any better result. This has occurred since the American Treaty was signed, and is a convincing proof of how little practical value the treaty is. The 29th Article of the treaty reads as follows:—

'"The principles of the Christian religion as professed by the Protestants and Roman Catholic Churches are recognised as teaching men to do good and to do to others as they would have others do to them. Hereafter those who quietly profess and teach those doctrines shall not be harassed or persecuted on account of their faith. Any person, whether citizen of the United States or Chinese convert, who, according to these tenets, shall peaceably teach and practise the

principles of Christianity shall in no case be interfered with or molested."

'Such is the article, and such is an instance of its flagrant violation. It is about the only clause in the treaty to which the Chinese Government could have any serious objection, and it is a clause which it will never observe unless compelled to do so.

'In April last year I visited Hang-Chow with 6000 copies of the New Testament, and other religious books, and they were all distributed. An American missionary and his family were living at the time in the city, and were on the best of terms with both the people and the officials. Between some of the Government officers and the missionaries, visits and presents were interchanged. Thus matters went on smoothly until the news of the defeat of the English and French forces in the north was noised abroad. No sooner did it reach Hang-Chow than the whole aspect of things underwent a change. The missionary was not only deserted, but ordered to return whence he came, and soon afterwards the native evangelists, who were peaceably teaching and preaching the principles of Christianity, were ordered to quit the city, and that in direct violation of a peaceable treaty which had just been formally signed and solemnly ratified.

'We trust that this state of things is not to continue long. God has His designs in reference to China, one of which is that she is to be given to Christ for His inheritance. Whatever stands in the way of the accomplishment of this glorious purpose must be removed. The exclusive policy of the existing

Government must yield ere long, and the standard of the Cross must be planted in every city throughout the Empire. Our sincere prayer is, that all this may be accomplished without bloodshed and carnage. We are anxiously waiting the development of future events. May we be prepared for all the duties and trials which await us in reference to them. Let China and her missionaries be frequently remembered at the Throne of Grace by all who love the Lord Jesus and feel an interest in the extension of His kingdom.'

CHAPTER V

THE T'AI-P'ING REBELS

THE missionary instinct, the consciousness of the vocation of the herald, the desire—which is as a fire in the bones—to carry the Message of Life to those who have not yet heard it, was conspicuously manifested by some of the men who were at Shanghai in the early years of Protestant missionary work in China. In no one was this light-footed restlessness of the eager messenger more strikingly marked than in Griffith John. It has been characteristic of him throughout his missionary life; it must have been a dominant feature in his character then.

It is somewhat remarkable that the references to Shanghai in his correspondence during all the years when it was his home and the centre of his work are brief and slight. His relations with his colleagues were friendly, and in one or two cases were intimate and cordial. His friendship with some of the missionaries of other Societies has been maintained with the strength of a close affection throughout long years and amidst many changes. The general life of the foreign community in Shanghai was vigorous, and there was much in the condition of public affairs during those eventful

years to attract the attention and appeal to the interest of one who has always been able to look out beyond the immediate circle of his own work and to note with sympathetic or with critical interest the movements of national policy and the general life of the community. Yet his correspondence gives little indication of his having been much influenced or occupied with Shanghai affairs. From the number of accounts of journeys in the country, and the dates of those journeys, it would appear that Shanghai was only his convenient centre of supplies and point of departure, but that he took a very secondary part in the work of the Mission in the city. Judging by his own account of himself, written many years after, he must have been an exceptionally lively junior. Writing to the *Christian* in June 1889, he says:—

'The new missionary is, as a rule, a prolific method-maker, and the younger he is the greater his genius in this line of things. Did I not know more than all my seniors when I arrived at Shanghai more than thirty years ago? Was it not as clear as daylight that their methods were all wrong, and that their small success was to be ascribed to their want of insight? The young missionary, like the globe-trotter, is generally a man who knows everything better than the man who ought to know most.'

Probably the work of itineration was largely handed over to him on account of the exuberant energy which could not rest satisfied with the routine of labour in the city of Shanghai.

After the temporary suspension of country work

which resulted from the news of the reverse suffered by the British force at the mouth of the Pei-ho, travelling was resumed with renewed earnestness, and the places which had been occupied by the Mission were revisited for the purpose of re-establishing the work. In the course of these journeys Mr. John speedily came into a region in which the T'ai-p'ing rebels were making great headway. The following letters give an interesting account of his experiences :—

'SHANGHAI, *June* 13, 1860.

'I have taken two or three long trips of late into the interior, one to Hang-Chow and one to Cuchen. The former had only just been evacuated by the rebels, and the latter has been taken by them since. They are making rapid strides in this part of the country now. They would have paid a visit to Shanghai had it not been for the presence of the English and French forces. The city is at present protected by the English and the French. On account of this disturbed state of things, we are not able to go much about just now. Poor China! torn as it is by internal dissension and threatened by a powerful enemy without!'

'SHANGHAI, *June* 27, 1860.

'The following is a brief account of a trip to Hang-Chow after its evacuation by the rebels. From it you will learn that they are making rapid strides in this part of the country, and that the Imperialist cause has not been at such a low ebb for many years. I hope to learn more of the rebels soon by a personal inter-

view with them. Reports are so various and contradictory that no reliance can be placed on them. Some make them out to be saints, and others demons.'

'*May* 19.—In company with Mr. Wylie I left Shanghai this morning for the purpose of visiting Sung-Kiong and Hang-Chow. Early on the following morning we reached the former city. Soon after our arrival the converts met as usual for worship. Besides the converts, eleven inquirers came forward as applicants for baptism. All these were examined; and four of them were judged worthy of admission into the Church. These four were consequently baptized, and the others were remanded to a future period. In the afternoon we had another service for the heathen, when Mr. Wylie, the native assistant, and myself spoke to them at length. After this we walked through the western suburb and the city, distributing tracts and speaking a word here and there as circumstances would permit. On the following morning we had the pleasure of meeting the converts again, when we read a portion of the word of God and prayed together. Having exhorted them to remain steadfast in the faith, and having commended them to the care of Him who careth for all who are His, we bid them a temporary farewell.

'On our way to Hang-Chow we called at the cities of Kia Shan, Kia Hing, and Shih Mun. These cities had not been visited since our defeat in the north in June last, and the subsequent disturbances in Shanghai connected with the coolie trade. Of course we hardly

knew what kind of reception we had to expect, whether, as in Su-Chow, we should find the gates closed against us for the time. Whatever may have been our surmises beforehand, we were glad to find on our arrival at each of these cities that the gates were as open to us as ever, and the people as quiet and innocent. We preached and distributed books without the least inconvenience.

'*May* 23.—We reached Hang-Chow this evening. At the outset we had our doubts as to the possibility of our being able to pass the great Custom-house in the present disturbed state of things. It was rather late when we arrived, and the gate was already closed. No sooner, however, was it known that the boat belonged to foreigners than it was opened and we were allowed to pass on. Next morning after an early breakfast we took some tracts with us and walked towards the lake.

'Last year when I visited Hang-Chow, this lake presented one of the gayest spectacles I had ever seen. The shore was lined with visitors who had come from all parts of the surrounding country to offer at the shrine of Kwan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy. The lake itself, bearing on its bosom a large number of small pleasure-boats, gaudily decorated without with rich tapestry, red tassels, and variegated lanterns, and adorned within with the very *élite* of this polished city, seemed instinct with life and merriment. Then the temples and magnificent monasteries in the vicinity of the lake, with their clouds of incense perpetually ascending, and their thousands of priests chanting their morning and evening prayers accompanied with an



Photo] *[Bernard Upward.*

CHINESE CHRISTIANS AT WORSHIP.



occasional deep-toned toll of the great bell, added much to the impressiveness of the scene. On this occasion, however, there was hardly a human being to be seen on the shore, all the boats had disappeared, the temples were empty of both priests and worshippers, prayers had ceased to be offered and chants to be sung, and a profound melancholy stillness spread over and rested upon the place.

'We visited some of the monasteries, and found them nearly all deserted. A few of the priests had ventured to return, but by far the majority of them had not yet mustered up sufficient courage to leave their places of refuge. Those whom we met were very much dejected, and complained bitterly of the times. As none came to worship, they had nothing to subsist on. One poor monk, as he was busily masticating some dry beans, said that the priests had to be content with beans now, because they had no money to buy rice. Some of the temples had been burnt down by the rebels; but they seem generally to have been satisfied with depriving the images of their noses, and thus manifested their contempt of the idol gods. When we entered the first monastery we were somewhat amused with the noseless spectacle which the majority of the gods presented.

'Hang-Chow is called Fulo-ti, "the land of Buddha," and the people seem to have had a strong faith in the sanctity of the place and the omnipotence of the gods. This faith has been materially weakened by the recent demolition of the temples, the defacement of the gods, and the profanation of this holy ground.

Whatever may be said of the T'ai-p'ings, it is certain that they have done a great deal towards shaking the confidence of the people in their false divinities. When talking to a man the other day about the impotence of the gods to save, he said, "The fact is, they have no power over the affairs of the world; it is confined to Hades."

'This sentiment, were it to become general, would effectually undermine the popular superstition, as that is based principally on the common impression that all sublunary events are under the direction of the gods. It is not the hopes and fears of future but present happiness and misery that fill the temples with worshippers and bring a revenue to the priests.

'On the following day we went into the city with some tracts as usual. On our way we passed the Tsau King Monastery. Last year there were about four hundred priests residing here, now there were only about twenty. All the others together with the abbot had fled into the country. We were told by those that remained that three of their number had been killed by the rebels. The whole of the western suburb was burnt down, and the city gate leading to it blocked up with sand-bags. Passing alongside the walls, our attention was directed to a large pit into which upwards of a thousand of the slain had been thrown pell-mell.

'At length we arrived at an open gate. The guard was somewhat startled at our sudden appearance. No attempt, however, was made to turn us back. We then made our way towards the hill which is in the

city. On our way we passed a man in a standing cage who was accused of incendiarism. This cage was made to fit tight around him, so that he could not rest in any way. He was doomed to perish in it. He had stood when we saw him eighteen days, and his legs were swelling fast; he was expected to live five or six days longer, when he would die from exhaustion. This most cruel mode of punishment is, I believe, of recent invention. At length we reached the top of the hill, where there was a large encampment of soldiers. In the tents we saw some foreign fire-arms, such as pistols, in a very rusty condition. Several of the temples on the hill were burnt down. The view of the city from the top of this hill was sad in the extreme. Here and there and everywhere extensive ruins were to be seen. Some of the finest parts of the city have been burnt down. In walking through the parts that formerly used to be busiest, we scarcely met a single respectable man.

'We called at the venerable Mahommedan mosque, which stood almost solitary amid the surrounding desolation. The flames had just touched its walls, but no great injury was done. We were sorry to learn that more than a hundred of their number had been slain. Last year they numbered from four to five hundred families. Now they are only about three hundred. The moolah was still suffering from a sword wound received at the hands of the T'ai-p'ings, which, he said, they inflicted upon him in order to extort money from him. We were told by an official at one of the gates that the number of real rebels was small, but

that thousands of the inhabitants, who were rebels in disguise, joined them. About sixty thousand lives were lost, the majority of which were suicides. Such is the condition in which we found the place, and it is sad to contemplate, especially when compared with its former state.

'We left Hang-Chow on the following morning. On our way we met hundreds who were flying from the neighbouring cities, on account of the danger they were in of falling into the hands of the rebels. We called at the large town of Hoh-zeh, and spent the Sabbath at Hai Ning. At the latter place we had a fine opportunity of preaching and distributing our books. The people here, as elsewhere, were in great fear. We arrived home on May 31 in peace and safety.'

These experiences prompted the desire to come into closer touch with the leaders of that remarkable movement which was shaking China to its centre, and which contained in it so many elements of good that some ardent onlookers entertained the hope that it would be the means of China's regeneration.

The great rebellion, which for fifteen years devastated some of the richest and most prosperous provinces of China, and is estimated to have caused the loss of from fifteen to twenty millions of lives, was known by the singularly incongruous title 'T'ai-p'ing, or Great Peace.' It was really the expression of the inarticulate, unintelligent, and undisciplined revolt of great masses of the ignorant people against the tyranny and oppression of their rulers. Yet, strange to say, it owed its origin



and all the moral force it possessed, and which during its earlier years made it almost irresistible, to Christian teaching. The T'ai-p'ing Wang was probably indirectly indebted to Morrison for his first inspiration. Hung-siu-tsuen, who became the leader of the insurgents and the 'Celestial King' and head of the T'ai-p'ing rebellion, was born in a village about thirty miles from Canton, in a family formerly distinguished in the service of the State, but which had become poor. He was endowed with considerable ability, and was ambitious of literary distinction. He went into Canton one day about 1833 to present himself for examination, and met a missionary who spoke to him. The day after he met two Chinese Christians distributing books. One of them gave him a set of nine small books entitled *Good Words exhorting the Age.* These books were written by Dr. Morrison's convert Leang Afah, who was employed by him in distributing them, so that in all probability the missionary whom Hung met was Morrison himself, and the Chinese distributor was probably Leang Afah. The books were not much thought of for several years. Then after a long and severe illness, during which he had a succession of strange visions, they were remembered and studied. The result of his studies was the formation of a 'Society of Worshippers of God.' Hung also sought for further instruction from Mr. Roberts, an American Baptist missionary at Canton.

The Society grew in numbers and activity. One of its chief tenets was the renunciation of idol worship, and its iconoclastic zeal brought it into trouble. Hung's

followers were almost entirely Hakkas, between whom and the Puntis there was constant feud. The result was that the religious society gradually became involved in clan feuds. The local authorities used harsh measures in endeavouring to repress them, and the standard of revolt against the Tartar Government was raised. The Government troops were defeated, and crowds joined the insurrection. In three years the rebels had fought their way victoriously through the provinces of Kwang-Si, Hunan, Hupeh, and Ngan-Wei. They descended the Yang-tse River from Hankow, and on March 19, 1853, carried by assault Nanking, the ancient capital of the Empire. Here they established the centre and headquarters of their organisation, intending to make it once more the capital of a new dynasty, and here the rebellion was finally crushed in 1865. The history of the rebellion is a sad story of high purpose deteriorated by success, and of lofty ideals corrupted by the cruelty, the plunder, and the licence of war.

The three main objects which the T'ai-p'ings set before them were the extirpation of the Tartars, to whom they showed no mercy, but slew men, women, and children ruthlessly; the abolition of idolatry; and the entire and absolute exclusion of opium. As information came to the missionary circle of the religious opinions of the T'ai-p'ings and of the high aims which seemed to inspire their leaders, great interest was excited and great hope was awakened. It seemed as though through this strange upheaval the way of the Lord was being prepared in China.

The hope was made stronger by the accession to



the ranks of the rebels of a man named Hung Jin, a relative of the Tien Wang, and one of his earliest and most earnest followers in the religious society he formed. Hung Jin was a man of exceptional ability and fine character, who had been in close contact with missionaries for four or five years. He had a very clear and intelligent acquaintance with Christian truth, and had been an earnest and effective evangelist. Dr. Meadows of Shanghai had a very high opinion of him. From 1855 to 1858 he was associated with the Hong-Kong Mission, and Dr. Legge, who was a shrewd discerner of character, wrote of him: 'He soon established himself in the confidence and esteem of the members of the Mission and the Chinese Christians connected with it. His literary attainments were respectable; his temper amiable and genial; his mind was characterised by a versatility unusual in a Chinaman. His knowledge of Christian doctrine was largely increased, and of the sincerity of his attachment to it there could be no doubt. His intercourse with Chinese Christians was what is termed *edifying*, calculated to promote their purity and stimulate their zeal. With other Chinese he was the proselytiser, fearlessly exposing their errors, and exhorting them to repent and believe the Gospel. Over young men his influence was peculiarly beneficial. In fact, whether the individuals were young or old, as was once observed by Mr. Chalmers, "Whenever you see any one having long and frequent intercourse with Hung Jin, you may be sure there is something good going on in him."'

Hung Jin had apparently given up all thought of

joining the rebels. In fact, he refused to become the leader of various bands who wished to join them. Suddenly a longing took possession of him to go and teach them the truth of Christ more perfectly. He went off and became one of their leaders.

After their retreat from Shanghai in 1853, the T'ai-p'ings seem to have withdrawn entirely from the province of Kiang-Su for some years. During this period they gave their strength to a great expedition to the north, with the intention of capturing Peking, and actually succeeded in getting within twenty miles of Tientsin. They then suffered an overwhelming defeat from the Imperialist troops, and had great difficulty in getting the broken remnant of their army back to Nanking. For some time they were practically confined to this place and one other stronghold, the country at large being apparently cleared of them. At the beginning of 1860 the tide turned again. Under the able leadership of the Chung Wang they defeated and dispersed the Imperialists, and once more began to swarm over the country. They poured into the province of Kiang-Su, captured and plundered city after city, and ultimately threatened Shanghai. It was at this time that the missionaries came into direct contact with them.

In April 1860, Mr. John, in the ordinary course of his work, visited Su-Chow, and it was at that time untouched by the rebels. In June a party of three American missionaries visited the city and found it wrecked. At the beginning of July another party, of whom Mr. John was one, paid a visit to the place. In

sending to the Directors a report of their visit, Mr. John said :—

'SHANGHAI, *July* 16, 1860.

'In my last communication I stated that I had some intention of visiting the insurgents' camp for the purpose of ascertaining for myself the character of the movement. This intention has since been put into execution, in company with our brethren Edkins, Macgowan, and Hall, and the result is given in letters which have appeared in the *North China Herald*, of which I send you a copy.

'*The week we spent in the insurgents' territory is by far the most eventful in my history.* In fact, it is the experience of a twelvemonth condensed into that of a week. We passed through many a scene of danger and trial. The second night we were in danger of being set upon by enraged and suspicious villagers. We were told on the next day that at one time they were on the point of beating the gongs to summon all the villagers to action. After matters had been explained they dispersed. The third night our boats were anchored between two fires—that of the villagers on the one hand, and the insurgents on the other. We found afterwards, however, what we did not know at the time, that the villagers were firing at a distance, so that we were in no real danger. The fourth night (and this was by far the most trying of all) we spent among dead bodies that were floating in the canal. For two or three hundred yards our boats had actually to push through heaps of bodies, in an advanced state

of decomposition. Many of these had been killed by the insurgents, but by far the majority were cases of suicide. In returning also we had many an anxious moment.'

The fuller narrative, which was printed in the *North China Herald*, was apparently from the pen of Mr. Edkins. It was accompanied by a note from Mr. John dealing specially with the question of British neutrality towards the rebels. This was followed by a further and lengthy communication from him, in which he gave fuller particulars of the religious beliefs and practices of the T'ai-p'ings, gathered after a second visit to Su-Chow. It is evident that at this time he and his friends were very favourably impressed with what they saw of the leaders, and that they entertained the hope that if they were treated sympathetically by foreigners the movement would prove a great blessing.

Such conflicting opinions have been expressed about the character of the T'ai-p'ings, and there is such a general ignorance of them, that the estimate of careful and fair-minded observers is worth considering.

The article is too long to reproduce in full. The following extracts embody the main paragraphs:—

'A party of five, consisting principally of English missionaries, returned yesterday morning from Su-Chow. They went with the desire of gaining information respecting the opinions and feelings of the insurgents, now in possession of that city, and also of communicating, as occasion should arise, information on Christianity.

'The reception they met with was remarkably friendly. Proceeding towards Bing-bong (Ping-wang), they reached the territory now under the insurgents, at a village three miles to the southward, called Wang-kia-chi. A body of about a hundred horse and foot were proceeding in single file towards Bing-bong, on their way from Kiahing. They stopped on seeing foreigners, and entered into friendly conversation, showing their confidence by freely partaking of cake and tea. There are many of them strong in muscle, free and bold in manner, and open in countenance, who appear to communicate their thoughts unreservedly. In answer to a question respecting a relative of the Tien Wang who had gone from Hong-Kong to join the rebellion, they stated that he is now second in command, with the title of Kang Wang.

'The officers at Ping-wang supplied their foreign visitors with passports to Su-Chow, and also to Wukiang, a city on the way to it. Provided with these, they went forward along the Grand Canal, noticing in many parts that the people were in the fields working, although this is one of the lines by which the T'ai-p'ings pass in large and small bodies between Su-Chow and Kiahing. When they appear, the villagers withdraw.

'At Wukiang, more state was observed in the appearance of the chief in command, it being a walled city, and the rank of the chief being that of "i," *right*, in the rebel nobility. This title stands immediately after that of wang (king). But the gay show here made of yellow and red banners before the residence of the

chief, and his stately robe and turban of yellow, were far surpassed by the display witnessed at Su-Chow in the palace of the Chung Wang. This chief was the conqueror of Chang-kwoh-liang at Tan-yang, and the subjugator of Chang-Chow, Su-Chow, and Kiahing. In addition to his remarkable military successes, he has the character of a good man, opposing the excesses of the troops, and protecting the suffering people, who are the victims of this civil war, from injury and insult.

'To his English visitors he behaved in the most friendly manner. They were allowed, on stating their objection to kneeling, to dispense with that ceremony, and appear with simply a bow, and uncovered. They had, however, to wait an hour and a half for the interview. This was accounted for by a visit the same evening, while they were waiting in another apartment, from the Ying Wang (flourishing king), who arrived from Nanking two days before. When he was gone it was about 8 P.M. The foreign party of four were then conducted to the entrance hall, where they stood for some minutes at the end of the long train of officers and servants, nearly a hundred in number, who stood facing each other in two rows. In the far interior was the Chung Wang himself. After a salute of six, fired with Chinese petards, with music and gong-beating to a most deafening extent, the visitors were marshalled up the long and gorgeous vista, through which they had stolen a few glances of curiosity. After bowing and standing before the chief for a minute, they were conducted to his right, where they stood during the interview. The hall of audience was carpeted with red.



Large lanthorns were held between the officers who stood on each side. They all wore robes and caps of red and yellow silk. The only person seated was the Chung Wang himself. He is a man of small, keen features, wears spectacles, and appears in a rich yellow robe and gold-embroidered hat after some ancient model.

'Conversation then commenced. The king was informed, in answer to his inquiries, that his visitors had asked an interview as followers of the religion of Jesus, and worshippers of God the Heavenly Father. The king then enumerated several leading points in Christian doctrine, and was satisfied to find that they are believed also by foreign nations. He asked what days in the cycle of twenty-eight we keep for worship, and when told that they are Fang, Hu, May, Sing, he observed that they are the same with theirs.

'He willingly accepted an offered present of Bibles and other books, and invited the party to remain for two or three days in quarters to be provided for them. They were then, after the same salute as on entrance, conducted on horses to the residence of Lieu, a high officer of amiable disposition, who entertained them hospitably enough for the rest of the evening. On their expressing a wish to return at once to Shanghai, they were escorted on horses to their boats.

'There cannot be less than 30,000 insurgents in the city, and perhaps the truth was told when they themselves stated that there were many more. Indeed, they appear to have overpowering force throughout the region from hence to Nanking.

'Many proofs offered themselves of the activity and vigour of the revolutionists. Large bodies of them move daily between the cities in their occupation. They have the energy which their religious principles and an active life induce. That they possess far greater physical and moral vigour than the Imperialists seems to account fairly for their great advance this year in power and numbers. One of their detachments, probably numbering several thousands, was proceeding from Su-Chow when our party left that city. At one in the morning they issued from the gates, and while the boats were slowly sculling or sailing on their return to Shanghai, the army was proceeding along the towing-path. They walk or ride in single file, and several boats, containing from twenty to thirty men, were also with them.

'The country people offer an ineffectual resistance to these large bodies of men. Their bands for self-protection, hastily organised and consisting of agricultural labourers unpractised in war, cannot make head against the tried warriors of the T'ai-p'ing party. Yet they are useful in beating the bounds of the villages at night. They encourage the people and keep away local banditti. The sight of these bands at night is very picturesque. Each person carries a lanthorn and a long pike, while a very few have matchlocks. This institution is called Mintwan.

'The rebel chiefs are most of them open and communicative. They made no secret of their intention to come to Shanghai. But they wish to maintain amity with their "brethren of the western oceans." Some

detachments already despatched to the region east of Su-Chow have been ordered to capture Shanghai, but prudence has not allowed the officers in command to attempt it. This, they say, is nothing but a temporary postponement of what is an essential point in their plan of conquest. They have at present few boats, and it is most likely that they will come by land. Should foreign soldiers happen to be posted at Zi-ka-wei, or any other spot beyond the limits of the foreign settlement, when they arrive, it is most sincerely to be hoped that the laws of neutrality will not be violated, nor any hostile act on our part be allowed to chill the friendly feeling that they now undoubtedly entertain. It would be no less imprudent than unjust to treat as our enemies these vigorous and independent bands of men, who have, during the present year, wrested from the Emperor the richest of his provinces.

'It is evident that the religious element enters very powerfully into this great revolutionary movement. Nothing can be more erroneous than the supposition that it is a purely political one, and that religion occupies but a subordinate place in it. So far is this from being the case, that, on the contrary, it is the basis upon which the former rests, and is its life-perpetuating source. The downfall of idolatry, and the establishment of the worship of the true God, are objects aimed at by them, with as much sincerity and devotion as the expulsion of the Manchus and the conquest of the Empire. In opposition to the pantheistic notions of the philosophers of the Sung dynasty, they hold the doctrine of the personality of

the deity; in opposition to the popular polytheistic notions, they have the clearest conception of the unity of God; and in opposition to the fatalism of philosophical Buddhism, they believe in and teach the doctrine of an all-superintending Providence. This appears on the very surface, and no one can be among them for any length of time without being impressed with it. They feel that they have a work to accomplish, and the deep conviction that they are guided by an unerring finger and supported by an omnipotent arm in its execution is their inspiration. Success they ascribe to the goodness of the Heavenly Father, and defeat to His chastisements. The deity is with them, not an abstract notion, nor a stern, implacable sovereign, but a loving Father, who watches tenderly over their affairs, and leads them by the hand.

'The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are their standard of faith now, as they were at the commencement of the movement. This is a very important fact. As long as they receive them as the word of God, we have reasonable grounds to hope that their errors will gradually be corrected. The missionary can always refer to these, and they cannot consistently object. They often speak of the death of Christ as atoning for the sins of the whole world, though they do not seem to have a clear notion of the *divinity* of His person. They regard Him as the greatest human being that has ever appeared in this world, and as *specially* the God-sent; and this will account for the revolutionary chief styling himself the

brother of Christ. He does not suppose that he himself is divine; his idea, probably, is that the Saviour is the greatest of God's messengers, and he himself the second. On this point, as well as on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, he needs enlightenment. Could he be convinced that Christ is divine as well as human, he would immediately see, and perhaps renounce, his error. That errors have crept in is not surprising; on the contrary, it would be one of the greatest miracles on record were it otherwise. The amount of religious knowledge diffused among the people is necessarily limited; that of the chiefs, though not very profound, is more extensive. It is in the Kwangsi men that the religious element runs wide and deep, whence it spreads over the surrounding mass. The latter are expected only to learn and chant their hymns of praise. The ability to do this, together with baptism, constitutes them brethren. We may expect that the advent of Hung Jin, who has been promoted to the highest rank, will have a salutary effect upon the movement in a religious point of view.

'The feeling which they entertain towards foreigners is apparently of the most friendly nature; they are always addressed as "our foreign brethren." "We worship the same Heavenly Father, and believe in the same Elder Brother; why should we be at variance?" They seem to be anxious for intercourse with foreigners, and desirous to promote the interests of trade. The opening up of the eighteen provinces to trade, they say, would be most pleasing to them. Some would say that policy would make them talk in this way—

suppose it did; how is it that policy, or something akin, does not make the Imperialists speak in the same way? They say that foreigners will be respected whenever they pass through their territory; and the respectful attention they have paid to those who have visited them is a sufficient proof of their sincerity.

'A great deal has been said about the cruelty of the "long-haired rebels"; but in this there has been much exaggeration and misrepresentation. In no instance have we witnessed any traces of wilful destruction. It is true they kill, but it is because they must do so or submit to be killed. They burn, but, so far as our observation went, it is invariably in self-defence. Much of the burning is done by the Imperialists before the arrival of the rebels, and the cases of suicide are far more numerous than those of murder. The fact that all the women have been allowed to leave Sungkiang, and that they are known in many cases to have made attempts to save men and women who had plunged themselves into the canals and rivers, is a proof that they are not the cruel, relentless marauders that they have been represented to be by many. They are revolutionists in the strictest sense of the term; both the work of slaughter and of plunder are carried on only so far as is necessary to secure the end. These are evils which necessarily accompany such a movement, and are justifiable or otherwise in so far as the movement itself is so.

'As to their general moral character we are scarcely able to give an opinion. Probably, taking them *en*

masse, they are not much superior to their fellow-countrymen in this respect. Though the use of opium is strictly forbidden, yet we know that it is largely consumed by them. Both the common soldiers and many of the chiefs partake of it freely. We were grieved to hear one of the chiefs (though not himself an opium-smoker) mentioning opium first in the list of articles he would like to be supplied with. Continual applications were made for opium and firearms. It cannot be reasonably expected that the moral character of men placed in such circumstances would be very high.

'As to their future success we can say nothing. They seem now to be taking a hold of this Empire with an iron grasp, and treading it like conquerors. The impression which an interview with them leaves upon the mind is that they look back upon the past thankfully, and to the future with buoyant and confident hope.'

The communications opened during this visit to Su-Chow led to a prompt and cordial response, with an invitation to visit the city again. The story is told by Mr. John in the following letter to the Secretary of the London Missionary Society:—

'SHANGHAI, *July* 31, 1860.

'By the last mail, Mr. Edkins and myself sent to the Mission House two pamphlets containing a lengthened account of our visit to the insurgents at Su-Chow. In a letter to Mr. Prout, I stated that we wrote a joint letter to Hung Jin (the Shield King),

congratulating him on his safe arrival in Nanking, and exhorting him to cleave to the purity of the Gospel; and another to the Chung Wang (Sincere King), containing a statement of Christian doctrine with special reference to the errors of the insurgents.

'Since then letters have been received from both the Shield King and the Sincere King, accompanied with a book, and four proclamations written by the former. The letters from both kings breathe a manliness and a kindliness of spirit that has quite surprised me. They are letters such as could never have been written by an unchristian Chinaman. I see in them a new element—an element which Christianity alone could infuse.

'The Shield King in his letter says that during his residence in Shanghai he was on very friendly terms with all the missionaries, continually conversing with them on the true doctrine, and thus receiving a large measure of the benefits of the Gospel. He left Hong-Kong for Nanking, not, he says, because he coveted emoluments and position, but that he might assist the Celestial King to spread the Gospel, cause the whole country to be swept clean of its idolatry, and return altogether to the holy religion of God the Heavenly Father and Jesus the Heavenly Elder Brother.

'He speaks of the Celestial King in the most eulogistic terms. He seems to have unbounded confidence in his piety, and admiration for his talents. He feels that he is indebted for what he is at present to the instructions he formerly received from the

missionaries. Then he goes on to say that, having heard that his brother, the Sincere King, had received a letter explaining the true doctrine, which was sufficient to show that men of the same religion are of one mind, he had come to Su-Chow to have an interview, and he sincerely hopes that his invitation will be accepted, so that conveniently in the presence of each other he may empty his whole heart.

'Such is the purport of the letter. It is gratifying, and a cause of much thankfulness, to find that such a man is in the camp. He has been placed, in a position of influence second only to his Christian profession, employing his time and talents in correcting errors and explaining the truth, and thus infusing into the gangrene of this movement a new and vigorous life-restoring element.

'The letter of the Chung Wang, or "Sincere King," at Su-Chow is also very interesting. He acknowledges the receipt of our letter which explains the true doctrine. He is much pleased and instructed.

'And now, having been favoured with the letter, he thinks that we will not spare the trouble of coming once more to visit him, so that we might empty our bosom's thoughts in the presence of each other. Moreover, he says the Shield King, having heard of our visit at Su-Chow, has come down with the express purpose of seeing us, and talking over various matters with us. Having not feared the distance of more than 20,000 miles to come to China to preach the Gospel, he feels quite sure that we will not hesitate to disregard the distance, seventy miles, to come

again to Su-Chow and talk over various subjects of importance.

'Such is the drift of Chung Wang's letter. From all this you will learn that our recent visit to Su-Chow has not been in vain; though we passed through many a scene of danger and trial during the eventful week, we have abundant reason to be very thankful for the issue.

'Though this is pleasing news, I trust it will not lead to any precipitate measures on the part of the Directors in reference to the insurgents. Their course hitherto has been that of cloud and sunshine, and it may be that such will be the case for years yet to come. Now they triumph everywhere in a most remarkable way, but the day of adversity may be at hand. They deserve the sympathy and prayer of British Christians, which, I trust, will not be withheld.'

Immediately after the despatch of this letter to London the little party of missionaries set off again on their second visit to the rebels at Su-Chow. Mr. John reported this journey to the Mission House in a letter written immediately after his return to Shanghai:—

'We reached Su-Chow early in August 2, and had an interview with the Kan Wang on the same day. He appeared in a rich robe and a gold-embroidered crown, surrounded by a number of officers, all of whom wore robes and caps of red and yellow silk. On our entering he stood up and received us with a hearty shake of the hand. He said that our visit made him very happy, and that his heart was quite set free. He



then made kind inquiries about his old friends in Shanghai, both native and foreign. He was much pleased to hear of the progress of the Gospel at Amoy; of the recent accessions of converts to the Church in the neighbourhood of Canton and Hong-Kong, and of the late revival in the West. "The kingdom of Christ," said he, "must spread and overcome every opposition; whatever may become of the celestial dynasty, there can be no doubt concerning this matter."

'He then put off his crown and robe, and dismissed his officers; after which we had a free and confidential conversation on various points. We gladly accepted an invitation to dine with him. Before partaking of the viands prepared for us, he proposed that we should sing a hymn and pray together. Having selected one of Dr. Medhurst's hymns, he himself started the tune, and sang with remarkable correctness, warmth, and energy. After a short prayer offered up by Mr. Edkins, we sat at table. The conversation turned almost exclusively upon religious subjects; in fact, he did not seem to wish to talk about anything else. He seemed to feel very grateful to Dr. Legge, Messrs. Chalmers, Hamberg, Edkins, and others, for their past kindness to him. He told us that his object in leaving Hong-Kong for Nanking was solely to preach the Gospel to the subjects of the celestial dynasty; and that on his arrival he begged permission of his cousin to be allowed to do so. The chief, however, would not hear of it, but insisted upon his immediate promotion to the rank of king. Though thoroughly

devoted to the new dynasty, and determined to live or die with it, he told us repeatedly that he was much happier when employed as a native assistant at Hong-Kong than now, notwithstanding the dignity conferred upon him and the authority with which he is invested. We were escorted on horses to our boat at a late hour.

'We visited him again on the following day. On our arrival at his residence we found a foreign merchant waiting upon him, and the Kan Wang considerably agitated in mind. The reason of this we afterwards learnt was that he had heard that the letters which he had sent to the representatives of foreign Powers at Shanghai had not been opened, and that the city was held by English as well as French soldiers. The first he spoke of as a personal insult to himself, and the second as a direct violation of the principle of neutrality, which foreigners should adopt between the two contending parties. Though we told him that these were matters with which we, as *missionaries*, had nothing to do, still we could not but feel a secret sympathy with him.

'After the merchant had left, we had a very interesting conversation with him on various matters, but especially the character of T'ai-p'ing Wang, the chief. Before separating, he proposed that we should commend each other to the care of Almighty God and invoke His blessing in prayer. After singing a hymn, he engaged in prayer. His prayer was exceedingly appropriate, fervent, and scriptural. He prayed that all the idols might perish, that the temples should be converted into chapels, and that pure Christianity



should speedily become the religion of China. This was a most interesting spectacle—a spectacle never to be forgotten. We parted again with a hearty shake of the hand. We were escorted to the boat, as on the previous day. A present of a goat and some fowls followed us from the Kan Wang.

'Having now done what we purposed to do, we turned our faces homewards. We reached home on August 5.'

Not long after this interesting interview with Hung Jin the T'ai-p'ings appeared once more before Shanghai. Mr. John wrote on September 3, 1860, as follows:—

'Since our return the insurgents have paid us a visit. For two or three weeks before their arrival the excitement was very great both among the foreigners and the natives. When they came within a mile of the settlement the excitement reached it highest pitch of intensity. We—myself and family—were mercifully preserved, not only from danger, but also from fear. Not a single foreigner was killed or even wounded. In fact, the insurgents did not come down to fight, but to open communication with the representatives of foreign Powers at this port. Mr. Bruce, influenced, I believe, by Mons. Bourboulon, and the latter influenced doubtless by the priests, would have nothing to say to them, but had decreed that they were to be replied to with shot and shell. They came entertaining the most friendly feeling imaginable towards all foreigners, but they were treated by us, and our allies the French, in a way that reflects disgrace on our flag.'



Six weeks later, writing on October 20, Mr. John refers to the same subject again :—

'The rebels are still advancing in this and the adjoining province. In fact, the whole of this province lies prostrate at their feet. The only place of any importance that has not fallen into their hands is Shanghai, which has been saved to the Imperialists by the English and the French, who checked the triumphant march of the insurgents on the morning of August 18. After a sharp engagement at a short distance from the city, in which they completely discomfited the Imperialists, they marched right up to the city gate and would have taken it with the greatest ease had it not been for our shot and grape which was mercilessly poured into the midst of them. They essayed to communicate with the officers on the walls; but to no purpose. It was irrevocably decreed that no reply was to be returned except in well-directed balls. On Monday morning they were seen marching towards the race-course. They were immediately fired upon and soon driven back. The fire was all on one side. They did not return a shot. It is very evident that they had no intention of injuring foreigners or foreign property; on the contrary, it seems clear that they came down with the most friendly intentions towards us. From what we have heard since, they were amazed at the manner of their reception, especially as they had not received any official intimation of our intention to hold the city and to resist them. After this repulse they soon disappeared, and have not returned since.



'Doubtless this movement abounds in errors of the gravest kind; and their practices in many respects are censurable. As yet they have signally failed in the important work of reorganisation. But, in spite of all these drawbacks, we still hope and believe that much good will come out of the movement. Satan has been busy sowing tares in this field, which have grown up with wonderful rapidity; but he must be very ignorant of the facts of the case, or blinded with prejudice, who does not see that beside and before the tares some grains of precious wheat have been sown. It would be sin in us to abandon the movement, because of its errors, as a vile thing. Rather let us do what we can by prayer and effort to purify it.'

There were at this time a large number of missionaries (fully seventy) gathered in Shanghai, awaiting the final settlement of the treaty of peace with China. They had interviewed Lord Elgin on his way north, and had been much gratified by his sympathetic reception of them. Now they were anticipating with eagerness the extension of their rights to travel and settle in the interior, and were making up their minds to commence missions in important centres as soon as they could do so. Among these no one was more eager for action than Mr. John. His correspondence shows that he seriously contemplated settling among the rebels at Nanking, and that the vision of the possibilities of Hankow was not absent from his mind. His first step was to endeavour to pay a visit to the rebel headquarters in order to obtain if possible an expression of their sympathy with Christian teachers

and missionaries, and a definite declaration of their willingness to let them settle and work in the territory of which they were *de facto* the rulers. Such was his confidence in the good feeling of the rebel leaders, notwithstanding the unexpected and uncalled-for treatment they had received from the foreigners, that he started on this expedition within two months after the repulse of their force at Shanghai. The trip was successful in the special object on account of which it was undertaken, and on his return he sent his friend Mr. Jacob an interesting account of his visit:—

'SHANGHAI, *December* 5, 1860.

'In my last communication I informed you that I was about leaving for Nanking. I returned in safety on the morning of the 2nd inst. after nearly a month's absence. In the meantime I have learnt a good deal of the religious tenets, and the religious, social, and political life of the insurgents. I was accompanied by Mr. Klockers of the English Baptist Mission, and two native brethren who speak the Canton dialect. The latter proved very valuable in my intercourse with the Canton chieftains. We were received at all the cities, towns, and villages through which we passed with marked respect, and treated as brethren. The distance between this and Nanking is about 250 English miles. In returning we travelled night and day without fear of molestation. Though these men have fallen into many grievous errors, they doubtless have the seeds of Christianity, as will appear from the enclosed. They have created a vacuum, not only in the temples, but

also in the hearts of the people, which remains to be filled. This is the missionary's work, a work that might be done immediately were it not for the unaccountable policy of the representatives of foreign Powers at this port.

'My principal object in going to Nanking has been fully realised. My object was to obtain from the chief an Edict of Religious Toleration. This I have obtained. It gives full permission to missionaries of every persuasion to enter into and live in the insurgents' territory for the purpose of carrying on missionary work. I had some difficulty in obtaining this, but ultimately succeeded. The phraseology in some parts is bombastic, and therefore objectionable; but the simple meaning is full toleration to all Christians, whether Protestants or Roman Catholics. "I see that the missionaries are sincere and faithful men, and that they do not count suffering with Christ anything, and because of this I esteem them very highly." Such are the words of the Edict. Then comes a command to the kings to issue orders to all the brethren to treat the missionary exceedingly well.

'I showed the Edict at Su-Chow, and asked the chiefs if they would help me to get a house, a chapel, and necessary buildings. "Yes," said they, "you come and it will be all right." I am sorry to say, however, that Su-Chow is a mere camp, and that it would hardly be possible for a missionary to live in the city at present. I send you the original of this Edict written by the young prince himself, and bearing the seal of his father. I firmly believe that God is uprooting

idolatry in the land through the insurgents, and that He will, by means of them in connection with the foreign missionary, plant Christianity in its stead. Let the prayers of our brethren in England be more fervent than ever on behalf of China! The King Chang at Nanking begged of me to inform the foreign brethren for him that the following are his views:—

'"You have had the Gospel for upwards of 1800 years, we only as it were eight days. Your knowledge of it ought to be correct and extensive. Ours must necessarily be limited and imperfect. You must therefore bear with us for the present, and we will gradually improve. As for the Gospel, it is one, and must be propagated throughout the land. Let the foreign brethren all know that we are determined to uproot idolatry and plant Christianity in its place."

'This seems to be very encouraging. The former part of the task they will surely accomplish if God will prosper them; let the Church and her missionaries in China see to the latter. All the way up from Su-Chow to Nanking the idols are smashed, and in the latter place there is not a vestige of idolatry remaining.'

As the rebellion failed, the Edict obtained was not of any permanent value. It remains of curious interest as a statement of the attitude of the leaders of this strange movement towards Christianity. Whatever their failings were, and however erroneous and even blasphemous some of their opinions and claims may have been, they seem to have been genuinely friendly towards missionary work. Some of them were prob-

ably sincerely desirous of having errors and mistakes corrected by the advent of Christian teachers. Mr. John felt strongly moved to settle amongst them in Nanking, but further consideration, and the advice of friends, led him to decide that the time was not opportune for such a step.

Mr. John visited Nanking once more with his colleague, Mr. Wilson, in April 1861. While still hopeful of the movement, he was disappointed at the signs of a change for the worse in the character and pretensions of the leader and in the habits of his followers. This was his last direct communication with the rebels. The rest of their story may be very briefly told. It may be doubted if the Imperial troops would have made any effectual headway against them had they not engaged foreign help. The first really effective effort to subdue them was made under the leadership of the American Ward. Then the British Government departed from the line of strict neutrality by lending Major Gordon to the Imperialists; and that high-souled and gallant officer was, to his great indignation and disgust, associated with looting, cruelty, and treachery of the most atrocious kind on the part of Li Hung Chang.

Nanking was finally taken by the Imperial troops in 1864. The T'ai-p'ing Wang committed suicide to escape the ignominy of capture. Hung Jin, the Kan Wang, having the special care of the young prince, did his best to get him away, but they were pursued and captured. The young prince was beheaded on the spot, and Hung Jin, after being respited for a week

('for the purpose of completing his memoirs'!), was also put to death.

A few days after his return to Shanghai from his first visit to Nanking, Mr. John wrote to the Directors of the Society of his plans and wishes. In this letter the possibility of going up the Yang-tse to commence work at Hankow began to appear above the horizon. Evidently he was thinking of it.

'SHANGHAI, *December* 17, 1860.

'When I returned from Nanking I fully intended to go and live in that city if practicable. After much thought, and some consultation with those who are in authority, I have come to the conclusion that it would be premature to do so just now. Were I to go among them in the present state of things—intermediate between Nanking and Shanghai being almost entirely cut off—I should have to cast myself upon them for support. This could not be done without undermining my own personal influence, and injuring the cause which I have dearest to my heart. Within four months something decisive will be done on the Yang-tse. The river, I am told on good authority, is to be opened at once, and the ports of Hankow and Kiu-kiang are to become consular ports. Another expedition is about to go up the river. Then it will be determined what is to be done with the insurgents. I was told the other day, by one who ought to know a great deal about it, that our future policy towards them will depend upon their conduct towards us. They may be treated as friends, or on the other hand as foes. If



not as the former, I am convinced that it will be our fault, because they cherish the kindliest feeling towards us, in spite of our infamous conduct towards them when they visited Shanghai.

'Very little can be done in this part of the country before the results of this expedition are known. I have made up my mind to join Mr. Edkins at Chefoo in Shan-Tung, and to spend the winter with him. Having had a partial intimation of the probability of my being invited to go with the expedition, I should have preferred doing so, did not duty point out Chefoo as the place where my service is needed just now. Mr. Edkins is alone, and needs assistance. Moreover, there is not much probability of the expedition taking place within two months. As I have no idea of staying at Chefoo, I am not taking my family with me. In three or four months hence we shall know how much of the country is to be opened to the preaching of the Gospel. We do not know now. Hence I have decided on spending the winter with Mr. E., and then return to Shanghai and reconsider the whole matter. Hankow should by all means be occupied by our Society. A more important or inviting sphere of missionary labour China does not present. Then there is Tientsin in the north. What is to be done with it? Are we to confine our energies to the Yang-tse and the south of the Yang-tse, or are we to divide them between the north and the south? I hope and pray that the Directors will give this subject their earliest consideration. We are anxious to carry out the wishes and designs of the Churches and the Board, and are

now waiting to know them. If the whole matter is left to ourselves, we shall do the best we can. This is a most important crisis in the spiritual as well as the political history of this people. The insurgents are making rapid strides, and are determined to uproot idolatry in the land and to plant Christianity in its room. The former they will do with a masterly hand, and the latter will not be left undone, if the Churches and missionaries are alive to their duty in reference to this great movement.'

The day after this letter to the Directors was written Mr. John left Shanghai for Chefoo. Shortly after his arrival he wrote to Mr. Jacob to tell him of his movements :—

'CHEFOO, *January* 8, 1861.

'From the above you will see that I am writing you from a place I never was at before. This province is celebrated as the birthplace of Confucius and the principal sphere of his labours. I left Shanghai on the 19th ult., and arrived here on the 30th, a remarkably quiet passage for the season of the year. Mr. Edkins, one of our missionaries, came up to this place about three months ago, and has established a station here. He was very anxious that I should join him. As nothing could be done in the south for two or three months, I felt it to be my duty to do so. So I came with the view of returning to Shanghai at the end of the above-mentioned period to reconsider the whole matter. This is a very healthy, and in many respects an interesting spot. The Shan-Tung life is very

different from anything to be seen in the south. The sea, the bay, the hills and mountains, all conspire to make it a charming place, and often remind me of many a lovely spot in dear old Wales. It is altogether a new field of labour, and waits to be cultivated. I have been spending some of my time in going among the towns and valleys about here. I intend visiting every city in this neighbourhood, and not a few in the interior, before I leave. I shall endeavour to sow the seed as widely as possible. May God grant the increase.'

On his return to Shanghai, Mr. John wrote again to the same constant correspondent:—

'SHANGHAI, *March* 5, 1861.

'I came down with the expectation of going with the expedition up the Yang-tse, but unfortunately was too late. The Admiral has had an interview with the chiefs at Nanking. They were very friendly in their bearing. A man-of-war is to be stationed there for the protection of British interests on the river. The Chung Wang in his interview with the Captain said that opium would be interdicted in our trade on the Yang-tse. The Admiral is said to have declined to entertain the subject, but declared that for any insult offered to the British flag they would be held responsible. That is to say, whether you like it or not, you must admit it. You know that opium is prohibited under the penalty of death in the rebel territory. Many of them smoke, but such is the law. They will doubtless do what they

can to prevent its importation. Are we to behold another attempt to force this horrible poison on the Chinese? I fear it. Sooner or later we must treat with these men, for nearly all the Yang-tse up to Hankow is in their possession. They will resist any attempt to force the importation of opium, and nothing but the fear of our guns will make them yield. Will Christian England be guilty of such a crime? God forbid.

'I am hoping to leave Shanghai soon for the interior. Of this prospect I am truly glad.'

The close of the year 1860 was marked by one of those events which, counting for so little in the estimate of the general public, are great landmarks in the personal history of a missionary's life. In November his elder boy Griffith was sent home to the care of friends in Wales. The child was scarcely *five* years old, the distance was great, the means of communication slow and infrequent, the prospect of seeing him again for years was very small, and the parental feeling was very strong. They faced the difficulty, however, in the interests of the boy himself, as many another missionary has done; and, as an exceptionally favourable opportunity offered, they sent him off in the 'Imperatrix,' under the care of their colleague, Mr. Wylie, and of some close friends belonging to the Church Missionary Society.

Mr. John has not been in the habit of dwelling largely on his domestic life in his correspondence, but there are glimpses in some of his letters which show

how strong and tender his home affections have been. On some of his shorter itinerating journeys Mrs. John and the two little ones were his companions in his boat. On other occasions he returned home with the speed of one who had strong attractions there. The decision to send away from them one who had arrived at an age when he must have been the light and joy of the house was not easy. Four months after his departure the father wrote to his friend Mr. Jacob:—

'SHANGHAI, *April* 5, 1861.

'You seem all of you to be greatly surprised at our sending him so young. We are sometimes astonished at ourselves, and I doubt whether we shall ever be equal to another such trial. I am still convinced it was the best course that we could take in the circumstances. It is impossible to bring up children, especially boys, as they should be brought up in China. Some of the most ungodly young men in China are missionaries' children. To appreciate this remark, experience is absolutely necessary.

'In Mei foh's [Chinese name] case we find that every summer tells more and more on his constitution. The last brought him very low.'

Mr. John's opinions about the perils to youth in China did not modify with the passing years. In due time his second son and then his daughter had to be left in England for education; and the indications of his thought and desire about them are constant and sometimes very touching. His old pastor, Mr. Jacob,

kindly undertook to act the part of a father to the boys; and, writing to him about the future of one of them when they had both reached the threshold of manhood, he says: 'You have no idea of the temptations of life out here to any young man. Almost every one goes to the devil, and do what you may you cannot prevent the onward rush.' It has to be thankfully acknowledged that a great change for the better has come over society in the East in recent years, in consequence of the much larger proportion of the foreign residents who are now married, and who cultivate the tastes and pleasures of home life. Temptation is everywhere, and it is probably still exceptionally severe in communities where there is a large heathen population with a very low view of morality, but protective, wholesome, and elevating influences also abound to an extent entirely unknown a few years ago.



CHAPTER VI

HANKOW AT LAST

THE year 1861 found Mr. John still unsettled as to his permanent location as a missionary, but with the ardent desire undimmed in his heart to press on to some sphere not yet occupied. He had been six years in China, but from circumstances over which he had no control he had not yet been able to settle down permanently in any sphere he could call his own. The two great cities, Su-Chow and Hang-Chow, which he had visited again and again, and which had attracted him greatly, were not open to him. The American Presbyterians had resolved to make Su-Chow the centre of their Mission, and had actually commenced work by placing two missionaries there shortly before the rebels captured and wrecked the city. Hang-Chow —which, after the rebellion was quelled, was occupied by the Church Missionary Society, and became one of the strongest and most successful centres of that great Society's operations in China—was at this time little more than a vast rebel camp, which presented no opportunity for regular missionary work, and was scarcely the place to which a missionary could take his family. Nanking, to which he had been attracted

by his interest in what he had seen of the rebels, he decided after a second visit was not a suitable centre for missionary occupation. Niuchwang, in the north, on the Gulf of Pechili, one of the new treaty ports, had also been suggested to him, but for various reasons seemed unsuitable.

There remained that great highway to the centre of China which had recently been opened. Close by was the great river, the Yang-tse-kiang, 'The Girdle of China,' 'The Son of the Ocean,' rolling its vast flood down to the sea, coming from mysterious distances more than 2000 miles away in the west of the Empire, draining an area of 750,000 square miles, passing on its way through province after province of the wealthiest and most prosperous part of China, bathing the feet of scores of great cities and hundreds of towns, bearing on its bosom, in countless quaint and clumsy craft, the traffic of a vast region. The fascination of such a river, with all it represented and suggested of unknown regions where the Gospel had never yet been preached, must have been exceedingly great.

In a letter written from Hankow to the London Missionary Society shortly after his arrival there, Mr. John describes the characteristics of the eight provinces through which the river flows, and then says:—

'In these regions the beauty and riches of China are most amply displayed; and whether we consider their agricultural resources, their great manufactories, their various productions, their many canals and tributary rivers, these provinces doubtless constitute the best territory of China.



'Such is the vast territory into which we are introduced, and the immense population with which we are brought into contact, by the recent opening up of this "great river." But this is not all. With this river at our command, we can with ease, by means of its numerous affluents, penetrate those provinces which lie south and north of it, and eventually we shall be able, if necessary, to proceed beyond the confines of China proper into the very heart of Tartary and Thibet.'

The brief autobiographical sketch which Dr. John has prepared of his early years and of his early days in China terminates at this point in his history, and its concluding paragraphs form a fitting introduction to the story of the crowded years which have passed since then:—

'The Treaty of Tientsin, which came into full operation in 1860, added nine new ports to the preceding five, and threw the whole country open so far as the right to travel is concerned. Both the missionary and the merchant were transported with joy when it became known that the Yang-tse was thrown open to foreign merchant-ships, and that Hankow was included among the ports opened to foreign trade. My own mind was soon made up. I had heard much and read much about Hankow, and many a time longed to visit the place. Now that it was actually open, I felt that I had no alternative but to be off, and to be off at once. I well remember with what transport of joy, on June 9, 1861, I stepped on board the "Hellespont," the steamer that was to take

my colleague, the Rev. R. Wilson, and myself to Hankow; and I well remember how I felt when ascending the mighty Yang-tse, as if a new world was bursting on my vision, and how thankful we both were that that magnificent stream had become a highway to the messengers of the Cross.

'It would be impossible for me to describe my feelings when I found myself actually at Hankow. I could hardly believe that I was standing in the very centre of that China that had been closed till then against the outer barbarian, and that it would be my privilege on the very next day to appear as a missionary of the Cross in the streets of the famous city. I thought of the great and good men who had been longing to see what I was seeing, but did not see it. I thought of Milne, who, on his arrival at Canton, knocked earnestly for admittance, but was ruthlessly driven away. I thought of Morrison, who knocked for twenty-six years, but died without having received the promise. I thought of Medhurst, and remembered the last prayer I heard him offer up at Shanghai: "O God, open China, and scatter Thy servants." I thought of these and many others, who had laboured long and well in the days gone by, and felt as if they were present on this occasion, beholding my joy and rejoicing with me in the triumph of Divine providence over China's exclusiveness. I felt that I had got at last to the place where God would have me be, and my heart was at rest.

'My work has been largely that of the pioneer—the work of preparing the ways, of breaking up new

ground. This kind of work has many attractions, and I can never forget the gladness of my earlier efforts in that particular line of things. The early days at Shanghai, as the early days in Central China, were golden days in many respects. The joy of early missionary touring; the joy of opening the cities to missionary effort; the joy of establishing new mission stations; the joy of receiving one's first converts; the joy of preaching in a new language, and to congregations of hundreds and thousands of people who had never heard the Gospel before; the joy of facing dangers and getting out of them unhurt; the joy of writing your first tract or translating your first book; the joy of seeing visions of the coming glory, such as are specially revealed to the young and youthful missionary—such was the joy of those earlier days, and a great joy it was.

'The work before us now is that of teaching, training, consolidating, and building up. This is a work as great and as important as the other, and in some respects more difficult. It will require all the wisdom and grace that we can command. But I am confident that the God who has so richly blessed the Mission in the past will continue to bless it in the future. My own days of service are drawing to a close; but the work is God's work, and its success depends upon His presence, guidance, and blessing. The workers pass away, but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day—yea, and for ever.'

Getting to Hankow was not quite so easy in 1861 as it is now. Foreign traffic had not yet commenced,

and the palatial steamers which now ply between Shanghai and Hankow almost every day of the week, making the journey in three days, and carrying hundreds of passengers, were unheard of. A naval expedition consisting of five vessels went up the river under Admiral Hope, in March 1861, for the purpose of gathering information, and especially to make the necessary arrangements with the local authorities at Kiu-kiang and Hankow for the settlement of foreigners at these two newly opened ports. Consul Parkes went up with the Admiral to carry on the negotiations; and Mr. John hoped to be allowed to accompany them as a passenger, that he might see Hankow and judge of its suitability for occupation as a mission centre.

Arriving in Shanghai too late to go with the expedition, Mr. John had to take his chance of being conveyed by some merchant vessel. Evidently the demand for passages to the newly opened ports was far greater than the supply, and shipowners could make their own terms. He mentions in one of his letters that he had been asked to pay 500 taels, or upwards of £100, for passage money!

At length the opportunity came, and he and his colleague, Mr. Wilson, went up the Yang-tse in the 'Hellespont,' leaving Shanghai on June 9, and arriving at Hankow late on the 21st. The city had been four times in the hands of the T'ai-p'ing rebels, and on the last occasion the inhabitants had resisted, with the result that very great damage had been done to the buildings. It was thoroughly characteristic of Chinese methods that there were hundreds of military lanterns

hung out on the walls of Wuchang and on Han-Yang hill, to give the impression that there was a large military force on the spot for protection, the fact being that there were very few soldiers in the place, and a man was paid to go round and light up all the lanterns every night!

The two travellers were impressed, as every one who visits it is impressed, with the vast size of Hankow, and with the evidences of its importance as a great central mart and means of communication with distant parts of the Empire. A large part of the city was still in ruins as the result of the last visitation of the rebels; 'but there is a greatness about the general appearance of the place, though its glory has not been restored.' 'I have not seen a place that I like better in every respect than this. There is a vastness about it that takes my fancy wonderfully. The Chinese have well called it the "middle" or the "heart" of the Empire. From here the missionary can penetrate the country in every direction.'

Reporting to the Society on his course of action, Mr. John wrote:—

'Our object in visiting the place was to see whether it was desirable and practicable to establish a missionary station here in the present state of the surrounding country. We had not remained here many days before we became deeply impressed with its importance, and convinced of the desirability of its being occupied by us without delay. I know of no place in China that has a stronger claim to the prompt attention of the Society. Having made up our minds on this point, our next

task was to look out for a suitable house. After a great deal of searching and an infinite amount of talking, we succeeded in finding one that will answer our purpose for the time being.'

The 'suitable house' which was to answer the purpose for the time being has been thus described by one who knows it well:—'They found their first home in a small native house in a narrow lane in one of the most densely populated quarters of the Chinese city. In those dark and evil-smelling surroundings it is a marvel that they ever survived a Hankow summer. Two little children did fall a prey to the insanitary surroundings, but, in spite of it all, the Mission party kept cheery hearts.'

After three or four weeks of further prospecting, the two missionaries returned to Shanghai, Mr. Wilson to go on to Japan for health before attempting this new work, Mr. John to bring his wife and two little ones back to Hankow as speedily as possible. In the letter which has already been quoted from, this momentous step is very briefly and prosaically reported:—

'HANKOW, *September* 18, 1861.

'With the view of bringing my family to Hankow, I left for Shanghai on August 6 in a native boat, and arrived at the latter place on the 19th. On the way we encountered a terrible squall which threatened the immediate and complete destruction of our crazy craft. The crew, with the exception of one man, lost all presence of mind. Having given up all for lost, thay sat down trembling like so many aspen leaves.



THE FIRST HOME IN HANKOW.
(*Drawn from a photograph.*)





The storm soon passed away, and we were left monuments of the providential goodness of God's mercy.

'On the 2nd, myself and family bid adieu to Shanghai. We reached Hankow on the 12th. Since, I have been busily engaged in getting things into order. In a day or two I hope to be able to commence daily services in our preaching hall.'

It may be well at this point to pause for a while and look more closely at the place in which Mr. John had settled, and also to consider the situation created by his settlement in Hankow. It will speedily be seen as we proceed with our narrative, that the central figure is not simply a missionary who has had an exceptionally long and a remarkably successful career, but that he has been the moving spirit and most powerful magnetic force in a great enterprise, his presence, his personality, his ideas of work and principles of action moulding and inspiring the life of a company of others, and being instrumental, through the providence and blessing of God, in establishing and extending a great Mission with far-reaching agencies and wonderful results of blessing.

In the light of what has followed, the renting of that native house, up a narrow lane in an evil-smelling and crowded quarter of the great heathen city, is a profoundly suggestive and illustrative act and object-lesson. Mr. John and his companion, when they took that house, could not have foreseen what has happened within the lifetime of one of them, any more than

they foresaw that in little more than two years (August 11, 1863) the other, the Rev. Robert Wilson, would have ended his earthly ministry without being permitted to share in the ingathering of even the first-fruits of the harvest which has since been reaped.

The beginning of the Hankow Mission did not differ materially from the beginning of many other great and successful Missions.

Whether as the result of experience of what successful mission work involves in demands upon the pocket and the personal service of the Church, or from some other cause, a large number of those who in the present day profess to be interested in Missions seem to require that the enterprise shall be conducted on strictly scientific and business-like lines, the statesman, the careful organiser, the banker, and the accountant being brought into consultation before anything fresh is attempted. They want to be assured that the undertaking is thoroughly organised and equipped at the outset, and they ask that satisfactory assurance shall be given that if it grows and makes larger demands there will be resources adequate to meet all such growing needs.

It is all very sound and very wise, but somehow the facts of history do not support the theory. Those schemes of colonisation which have begun with a constitution, and have gathered together and shipped out the complete equipment of a fully organised colony, have not been conspicuous successes. The 'expansion of England' into a vast world-wide Empire has been due to the sporadic, unconnected, and uncalculating

efforts of her vigorous and enterprising sons. The frontier-man goes out to make for himself a home in the wilderness, little recking of the fresh responsibilities which will come upon his native land as the result of his action.

The growth of the kingdom of Christ seems to have proceeded on the same principle. Earnest hearts, filled with the love of Christ and longing to make others sharers in the salvation, have sent out missionaries certainly without calculating what would be the result in further demands upon themselves. Earnest-hearted men have given themselves up to the work of Missions, and have gone forth under the constraint and pressure of the 'heroic passion for saving souls.' They have not calculated beforehand whether their means were sufficient to support success. Unscientific and unbusiness-like souls, they have simply gone on, living day by day with the idea that the old promise still remained true, 'As thy day shall thy strength be.' Great embarrassment has undoubtedly come upon the Churches which sent them forth as the result of the blessing which has attended their labours, but to curtail effort in order to remove the pressure of this embarrassment would be to lose the greatest privilege of life.

The city of Hankow occupies geographically a unique position in China, and there are few places in the world which can at all rival it. Absolutely uninteresting and unattractive in its physical features, built on a vast plain, the greater part of which, lying only a few feet above the level of the river, is

submerged for many miles during the annual floods, it owes its importance solely to its vast trade and the energy of its inhabitants. Situated on the west bank of the Great River, just below the junction of an important tributary, the Han—which, though a small stream compared with the Yang-tse, provides a clear waterway for traffic for fully 300 miles—it is exceptionally well placed for commerce with the largest, most fertile, and wealthiest provinces of China. For many generations it has been a great and thriving centre of trade. Before it was captured by the rebels its main street is said to have been twelve miles long, and its population, according to native estimate, was from two millions to two and a half millions. Probably this estimate was greatly exaggerated, but there is no reason for thinking that the population was less than one million. Its shops and warehouses are exceptionally large, handsome, and numerous. Its merchants are princes; its various provincial and trade guilds are enormously wealthy and have great influence. Its river front on the Yang-tse, and also on the Han, is crowded with native vessels of all kinds, hundreds of which are moored in regular streets, with floating shops, restaurants, and places of amusement. Its streets are constantly thronged with a crowd of men from all parts of China.

On the south bank of the river Han is another town, Han-Yang, small and unimportant as compared with its big neighbour. It contains a hill to which every foreign visitor is promptly taken on arrival, for the view of the great city, which lies at one's feet,



stretching for fully five miles down the Yang-tse, and for three or more miles up the north bank of the Han.

On the opposite bank of the Yang-tse, which is rather more than a mile wide, and forty feet deep under normal conditions, is the city of Wuchang, the provincial capital and residence of the Viceroy. Its walls have a circuit of ten miles, and it is said to have, in prosperous times, a population of 800,000. It has not been until recently a place of trade, but is saturated with the pride and importance, the exclusiveness and the jealousies, of a great centre of government. The Viceroy of the two provinces of Hupeh and Hunan resides at Wuchang, the ruler of sixty millions of the most vigorous and conservative inhabitants of China, and one of the most powerful nobles of the Empire. Wuchang is also a great literary centre, to which come every three years students from all parts of China, often as many as ten thousand, to be examined for a high degree.

The late Dr. Mullens, who was an exceptionally keen and accurate observer, visited the mission in Hankow in 1865. He had lived in Calcutta, the greatest city in India, for years. He had, on his trip to China, already visited Peking, Tientsin, and Shanghai before going to Hankow. He wrote immediately after he left:—'On the morning after our arrival we all went over to Wuchang, and as I stood on the top of the hill in the centre of that city and beheld the three walled cities of the river beneath me, I could not help feeling that neither in India nor in China I had ever before looked on such a noble sphere for

missionary labour.' He adds: 'In all soberness I can assure you that the reality surpassed my expectations; while in our brother, Mr. John, I have been glad to find a man in thorough accord with the highest aims of the Society, caring for its interests in every way, and executing the work entrusted to him as founder of the Hankow Mission with singular judgment and discretion.'

Such a hive of life and work as these three cities present might well attract the attention and call out the enthusiasm and energy of the Church of Christ. To win Hankow would be to gain the most important strategic position in China. To capture Wuchang would be to control the intellectual and governing forces of a population larger than that of the British Isles.

How was the great task to be accomplished? What force would be regarded as adequate for the enterprise, and what resources would be provided for the work? The answer is a striking illustration of the literal acceptance by the Church, at any rate the Evangelical Protestant Church, of its Lord's words, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is as a grain of mustard seed, which indeed is the least of all seeds.' The history of Missions is full of illustrations of the truth that the Kingdom of Heaven is not to be estimated according to human standards. The answer of the Church of Christ to the opening of this unique position to its energies was to appoint two men, one of whom could not join his comrade for several months, to occupy a humble house in a mean street; and to bid them



witness for their Master to the countless multitude of preoccupied and unspiritual people who thronged its busy streets. Certainly, if any satisfactory results followed from such a beginning, it must be a convincing evidence of the inherent adaptation of the truth they preached to the needs of the human heart and of the power of the Spirit of God.

Mr. John and his companion were not the only foreigners in Hankow. Already, though the city had not been open to the foreigner for more than six months, twenty-two foreign hongs or companies had opened places of business. In his report for 1863 Mr. John writes:—

'When this mysteriously grand Hankow was to be thrown open to the victorious barbarian, both the merchant and the missionary were delighted with the prospect of being able soon to carry on their respective enterprises in so inviting a sphere. The merchants rushed up the river in rapid succession, and, in a business manner, took possession of the place. At first they had to put up with many inconveniences. Living in native houses, and scattered over all the town, they found it at the outset anything but pleasant and enjoyable—very different from that to which they had been accustomed. But gradually they are converting the most worthless part of the town into what is destined to be one of the most attractive spots in China.'

The young missionary did not feel that, because he had been sent to preach to the heathen, his countrymen had no claim upon him. They had come for business,

and had made no provision for their spiritual needs, but he promptly recognised his duty to them. Writing to a friend in November 1861, he says:—'On Sunday last I commenced an English service for the foreign residents. Not many attended. They care but little about religion. They look on the Sabbath just as on any other day. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Pray that these services may be blessed to the souls of not a few.'

These efforts were not in vain. The affectionate earnestness of the preacher, his fearless speech, his clear and eloquent statement of truth, and his personal magnetism arrested their attention and attracted them to him. Mr. John continued the services regularly for a long time. In 1864 they asked him to publish a volume of sermons he had preached, but he did not see his way clear to do so. In 1865 he refers again to this side of his work in a letter to his constant correspondent:—

'When I wrote you I was expecting to be released from the duties of the English work by the immediate arrival of a chaplain. The chaplain has not arrived yet, and since then the whole work has been thrown upon me, the other missionaries having backed out of it entirely. Four missionary stations and the English work in addition I find more than enough. I have had to lay aside altogether my literary plans and undertakings. I may take them up again. We shall see when the chaplain comes. I am glad to tell you that the English congregation has greatly improved since the whole work has been thrown upon me. Most of

the community attend now. We need, however, more of the Divine Spirit. There is much spiritual death in us all. I need it as well as my congregations. Something that would make us feel more intensely, and realise the truth more thoroughly, is what we want. Oh, my heart is cold, unimpressionable; and this is one reason why I do so little good.'

Ten years later, the congregation, having greatly profited by his help, when they were again without a chaplain tried hard to persuade him to take the post permanently. He wrote to Dr. Mullens on May 18, 1875:—'Whilst some of us are willing to do what we can for the community, we feel very profoundly that we are here for the Chinese, and that the *missionary* work is our one work. At the close of last year I received an *unanimous* invitation from the community to take the entire charge of the services. On every side I was urged to comply as the best thing that could be done for the foreigners at Hankow. In some respects I felt strongly inclined to accept the invitation; and if I could have seen that my missionary character would have been strengthened and developed, and my missionary work benefited by the step, I should certainly have taken it. This, however, I could not see, and hence declined.'

Attendance at the service was not the only evidence of the influence he exerted among his countrymen. Many of them, and not a few also of other foreign nationalities, became generous helpers of his efforts in other directions, as will be seen in the further course of the narrative.

For twelve months the mission of the London Missionary Society was the only representative of Protestant Christianity in Hankow and the whole of the province of Hupeh. In 1862 the Wesleyan Missionary Society sent a missionary to Hankow, who was followed in 1864 by a second. No other Society entered the field for ten years, when the China Inland Mission began a mission. Others have followed since, settling in various parts of the province.

The Church of Rome has been much more alive to the advantages of Hankow as a centre for missionary labour. Its missionaries found their way into the country apparently in disguise while it was still closed to the foreigner, and dared the risk of expulsion or martyrdom. In Mr. John's first official letter to the Society written immediately after his arrival, he says :—

'Three young men who had just arrived from Europe were my fellow-passengers to Hankow. There are twelve foreign missionaries and thirteen ordained natives (of the Romish Church) in this province. They have 15,000 converts. This is their headquarters in the province. The Bishop of Hupeh is also the Pope's Legate.'

The method adopted by Mr. John for making known his message was the apostolic one. He began at once to preach. What such preaching meant, and to whom it was addressed, may be gathered from his own account of it written not long after his arrival :—

'HANKOW, *November* 5, 1861.

'Having been for several weeks preaching daily to this people, you will be pleased to learn how the work is progressing. As we have no regular chapel, the services are conducted in a large hall in my house. The door is open every afternoon for two or three hours. The native assistants (two in number) and myself preach in turns. At the close of each service books are given away to all applicants who can read. My audience generally consists of the representatives of several provinces. Canton, Fuh-Kien, Si-Chwan, Kwei-Chow, Kan-Suh, Shan-Si, Shen-Si, Hunan, Kiang-Si, Ngan-hwei, Che-Kiang, Kiang-Su, etc., etc., all meet here in their respective merchants, artisans, and produce. Many of them come and go annually. Not a few attend our preaching from day to day; and to most our speech is quite intelligible. From this point the Gospel may penetrate and spread over the eighteen provinces. The Gospel is listened to invariably with much attention. Most come with the sole purpose of learning what this new doctrine is. The questions asked by them, and the answers elicited by questions put to them, are indicative of a state of mind far more inquisitive than that of any part of China that I have been to. The books are received thankfully, and, what is far better, are read by many. Those who have obtained one part of the Scriptures often come for the other part or parts, having read the first through. Others come for explanations. Two or three days ago I was surprised to hear a man talking fluently

with the native assistant, whilst I was giving away some books at the close of the service, about God, the Father in Heaven, Jesus Christ, atonement by the death of Jesus, Paul the Apostle, and such subjects. On inquiry, I found that he had already parts of the Scriptures, which he had read carefully, and was now in quest of more. Not long since I presented the Tao Tai with a copy of the New Testament, together with scientific works. To-day His Excellency called upon me. I was agreeably surprised to find that he was more deeply interested in the New Testament and our religion than in the other books. He told me that he had been reading the New Testament, which I found to be a fact from his subsequent inquiries.

'The Mandarins here are disposed to be very friendly. The district magistrate has called upon me twice, and written me several very kind letters. The Lieutenant-Governor has sent me a proclamation to be posted up on our door, commending both soldiers and people not to injure or molest the foreigners under the severest penalty.'

CHAPTER VII

THE POWER OF THE PREACHER

GRIFFITH JOHN has exerted an amazing and far-reaching influence by the work of his pen, but he has never wavered in his belief that the presentation of the Gospel by the living voice is the most efficient agency for the evangelisation of China. In his report for 1876 he wrote :—

'This has been a preaching mission from the beginning. Preaching is the work that we love best, and depend upon most for results. We believe that God can change the heart of the grown-up heathen, and that it is by no means necessary to get hold of the child in order to make a Christian of the man.

'Much, however, will depend upon our aim in preaching, and the spirit in which we convey our message. In no period of my life have I sought the immediate salvation of men with an aim so direct as I have done these two years. Formerly my immediate aim was the enlightenment of men, hoping that they might be converted some day. Of late my aim has been their conversion there and then. I have gone to the chapels day after day expecting to see men brought to God whilst speaking to them, and God has given

me to see wonderful manifestations of His saving power as the result. Some of our warmest, happiest, and most consistent members are men who have been brought to an immediate decision in the course of a single conversation. This directness of aim in regard to the immediate salvation of men has changed my mode of preaching. I know not whether you would call it preaching at all. Formerly I used to harangue from the platform or pulpit for an hour or an hour and a half. Now I sit or stand among the people, question them and re-question them, till a few ideas are clearly and firmly deposited in their minds, and then, with all the energy and earnestness I can command, I try and impress their minds with the importance of the things they have heard. If any one seem to be somewhat impressed, I take him to the vestry, where I explain matters more fully to him and pray with him. In this way some have been enlightened and won to Christ on the same day, whilst many have received impressions which cannot be effaced. During the coming year I hope to see much of the seed sown in this manner springing up to the praise and glory of God.'

Seventeen years later he expressed the same opinion. His report for the year 1893 contains the following paragraph:—

'Our evening congregations are magnificent. On these occasions the chapels are often crammed from the pulpit to the front door. I have often been greatly struck with the amount of knowledge possessed by some of our hearers, and very much rejoiced to learn

that the knowledge has been acquired by listening to the daily preaching at our chapels. After thirty-eight years of experience in the mission-field, and having tried various methods of work, I do not hesitate to say that here in Central China the method *par excellence* is the daily heralding of the Gospel in the chapels and the streets. Two candidates for baptism came before us this morning, and both of them have been brought to Christ through the daily preaching. Several of the sixty-eight adults who have joined us this year have been brought in through the same instrumentality. But what cheers my heart most is the vast amount of leavening work that is going on everywhere around us in connection with this method. This work cannot be reduced into statistics; and yet it is the work to which I attach most value. Its worth cannot be estimated now, but its importance will become apparent by and by.'

This strong conviction of the place and power of the living voice as the most effective means of spreading the knowledge of Christianity, and of impressing the conscience with the claim of Christ, is the more noticeable and suggestive, because Griffith John has always been extremely sensitive to the depressing influence of lack of fruit. He has known full well the keen pain which every earnest minister of Christ experiences as he discovers how wide is the difference between listening with interest and even with sincere appreciation, and that final submission of the will and the heart to the claim of Christ which is the birth of the soul. He has hungered for the

conversion of souls, and his correspondence with his most intimate friend contains many expressions of his deep dissatisfaction and trouble of heart because so few really receive his message. Notwithstanding this, his advice to every one is PREACH THE WORD.

The Rev. Gilbert Warren, the Chairman of the Wesleyan Mission in Central China, writes :—

'No one will have a right view of Dr. John who selects anything out of his very varied life-work to put before his preaching. He preached the very first day he landed in Hankow, and continued to preach day after day—out-of-doors till he could get a place fitted up for a preaching-hall ; and after that out-of-doors as well as in-doors. Before long, not only had he gathered round him a congregation—in those days any one hailing from other lands was sure to draw a crowd, indeed he was unable not to draw one,—his preaching had been owned of God, and the nucleus of the first Church in Central China had been formed as the result of this preaching.

'But for such a conspicuous example of evangelical preaching as every later missionary coming to Hankow had before him in Dr. John, it is quite possible that comparatively more attention might have been paid to other branches of Christian work, comparatively less to this. I very much doubt whether a different policy in this respect could have produced the blessed results which have attended the one actually adopted.'

Another of Mr. John's neighbours, the Rev. Joseph Adams of the American Baptist Missionary Union, who has known him for thirty years, has given a

graphic picture of the great preacher-missionary at work :—

'The visitor to the London Mission, Hankow, picks his way gingerly along the "Pig Street," avoiding rushing coolies, busy trades-people, sedan chairs, and the puddles *en route*. Turning aside into a wide gateway, he sees a large and handsome brick building, enclosed in a compound with high protecting fire-walls. A pleasant-looking gate-keeper smiles welcome. You notice the characters, "Fuh ying huei tang," "Gospel Meeting Hall," over the doors, and entering the building you are surprised to hear a low hum of voices, and to see that you have entered by the platform end of the church. Your are the cynosure of all eyes. The other end of the building opens on to the wide clean streets of the foreign settlement of Hankow. You are before a congregation of six or seven hundred men and women who are waiting for the service to begin. The women sit on the right side looking towards the platform, men in the centre and on the left. Your entrance excites some attention ; but every service sees visitors, either a young missionary, note-book under his hat, waiting to pick up phrases or illustrations for future use, or a stranger looking for the first time upon a large and devout congregation of Chinese.

'As we seat ourselves we notice that the other end of the church is so far away that features cannot be distinguished, and we can hardly tell if the people in the great gallery at the end are men or women. The windows give abundant light, coloured as it passes through them, and just where the sun falls the Chinese

are painted red, yellow, or blue in patches. There is a distinct smell of Chinaman, or Chinaman's clothes, although Boyle's ventilators are groaning in the roof, and many windows are open. We have time to study the congregation to which Dr. John is going to preach. Many are aged men and women, old pilgrims to Zion, who soon will see the King in His beauty. There are bright boys with hymn-books and Bibles tied up in their handkerchiefs, looking very important; girls with gay attire, hair tightly braided, and all expectant. The inevitable babies with their devoted mothers (who have several ways of keeping them quiet when the service proceeds, such as pinching their legs, compressing the windpipe, etc., etc., all of which are Chinese and quite orthodox, although sufficiently horrifying to the lady missionaries who are keeping the female crowd in order). The men's side does not require any such attention.

'There is a hush, as a short man, with healthy, bright face, keen eyes, white beard, and black hair, comes on the platform. He wears an Inverness cloak, which he throws back as he bends his head in prayer. The silence of communion with God is broken a few moments after as he stands forth with a look on his face which reveals that he has been on the Mount with God. The hymn is announced, and a rustle of leaves follows. Then the singing! At first an indistinct roar, it gradually shapes itself into some well-known tune, and all sing with the voice of many waters: not very musical, but all in time, swaying to and fro, mouths well open, heads thrown back. Said

Mrs. John long years ago, "Griffith, those Christians will never learn to sing properly." "Never mind, my dear, they do their best. They will sing better in Heaven." "I hope so," was the quick reply; "if they do not, they may get expelled for disturbing the harmony."

'When the sermon comes it is easy to see the audience expect to listen. There is no settling down in easy corners behind convenient pillars. The converts sit, Testaments open, ready to find the text or the references, showing by the facility with which they read that they know whether "Timothy" comes before or after "Hebrews." Dr. John keeps his Bible in one hand, with a sheet of note-paper containing an outline of his sermon; with the forefinger of the other hand he enforces his points. Sometimes he forgets his book and notes, and in the fire of his earnestness he speaks with vehemence, pacing to and fro on the platform; yet always carefully repeating and illustrating and applying his lessons in every possible way. It is a grand and impressive sight to see his power over these people. Here is a nursing mother, her child fractious and troublesome, but she has forgotten the babe in the keen attention of the preacher.

'As one listens to the impassioned words, we notice several things—Dr. John's intense sympathy with the brothers and sisters to whom he speaks. They are beloved of his soul, and they know it. We notice, too, his knowledge of their trials, their persecutions, their stumbling-blocks, and a starting tear here and there shows that his beautiful and resonant voice has carried a comforting and softening message right to the heart.

Then comes a change. The speaker is dwelling on sin and its character in the sight of a pure and holy God. How keen is the analysis of a Chinaman's self-deception; how scathing the exposure of duplicity, falsehood, and cunning; how terrible the picture of the wreck and ruin which are the wages of sin. We forget we are listening in Chinese. We feel the speaker is as grandly eloquent as ever he could be in his native Welsh or his adopted English tongue. The scholars, merchants, working men and women of his audience, listen breathlessly, often giving little expressions of amusement, of distress, of pity, of sorrow, as their feelings are touched in one way or another. What a royal preacher is Griffith John, and how magnificently he has for fifty years revelled in the joy of preaching One who is mighty to save. To God be the glory! How faithfully God, the Holy Spirit, has owned and blessed the plain preaching of the Gospel. There are "signs following" on every hand.

'The fine church we have been visiting is only one of several buildings used by Dr. John and his colleagues in Hankow. There is another a mile and a half away in the native city, where Dr. John preaches regularly, open every day in the week, every week in the year. The work at this place is different, the method adopted is not the same.

'In the courtyard is a well-stocked dépôt for the sale of Bibles and tracts. The chapel is a long and rather narrow building with a central aisle, seats in rows on each side. Notices exhorting visitors not to expectorate, smoke, or talk, adorn the walls. The

audience is largely heathen, and they do not always assemble readily to be preached to. Dr. John takes a chair and sits in the doorway, immediately attracting the attention of passers-by.

'"Aih yah! Cheli yiu ih-ko lao yang kuei tsi."

'"Hullo, here have one old foreign devil."

'"Ta tso shen mo si," says one.

'"He does what thing?"

'"Kiang tao-li."

'"Preach doctrine," says his friend laconically. He has evidently been there before.

'"Ting, ting."

'"Listen, listen," is the answer, and they come to have a look at the said "old foreign devil," who receives them with a bow, and asks their honourable names.

'"Not dare! my unworthy name is Wong."

'"May I ask your honourable title?"

'"My name is Yang Keh-fei" (Dr. John's Chinese name).

'"Where is your palatial residence?"

'"My grass hut is in Hankow."

'(A small crowd has gathered at the door, as the Chinese bump of inquisitiveness is large and hungry. Dr. John moves his chair back a few paces. Two seats fill up. Conversation resumed.)

'"Mr. Wong, I think you said you reside in Hankow?"

'Mr. Wong replies in the affirmative.

'"I presume you have a knowledge of characters?"

'"Your younger brother recognises a few."

'"Have you read the Christian Classics?"

'(Retreat to the platform end continued, four seats fill up. Mr. Wong and his friend follow up closer. New-comers fill up behind. Conversation resumed.)

'"I have not read the Christian Classics. What are they about?"

'Working-man interrupting: "I know. Their Classics tell about Jesus, and our Classics tell about Confucius. The foreigners worship Jesus, and we Chinese worship Confucius. It's all the same."

'Dr. John: "Allow me to instruct you in the difference between the Christian Classics and the Confucian books."

'Interest increasing. Dr. John stands up and begins to preach, gradually retreating up the chapel, followed by the crowd, which by this time is well into the scores, and grows into hundreds. Finally the Doctor lands on the platform, and keeps up the address and conversation for an hour. Then a Chinese evangelist takes his place, and holds the attention of the audience, which often changes, but always is renewed from the unending stream of human life ever passing by the doors.

'One is compelled to admire the tactfulness and wisdom shown in these conversations with outsiders. Much patience is needed, for audiences are not always friendly. All sorts and conditions of men are met with, and the skilfulness with which statements of doctrine are followed with questions which make men *think* is not easy to acquire.

'"Have you a temple in your village?"

'"Yes, we have a Buddhist temple."

'"Is there a Kwan Yin Pu Sah (Goddess of Mercy) there?"

'"Yes, we have a Goddess of Mercy there."

'"Have your women folk worshipped her?"

'"Yes, we have burned incense there."

'"Has the Goddess of Mercy heard your prayers?"

'"I do not know; I am an ignorant man."

'"Well, there is one true God, a God of Mercy. He hears my prayers. He has done a great deal for me. What have your idols done for you? Have you ever asked yourself, from whence do I come, and where am I going? What does the priest of Buddha tell you? What does the Taoist know? What did Confucius tell Ki Lu when he inquired about death? 'Wei chi seng, ie fan chi si.' 'While you do not know life, how can you know about death?' Jesus came to tell us from whence we came, and how sin can be put away, and our souls prepared for the life after death."

'It is solemn and deeply interesting to see these men as the first ray of divine light enters the mind. Like men lost in dark caves of ignorance and sin, they see the dim gleam of a far-away light and liberty of the sons of God. Once let a little light enter the darkened mind, and sooner or later that soul will draw nearer the source of light and salvation. Hence Dr. John's constant advice to young missionaries is: *preach the Gospel*, and *take time to be holy* as a preparation for preaching the Gospel. When preaching to others you lose the sense of depression and weariness. "The reflex blessing on the preacher is very great. It is as important for your own spiritual sustenance that you

preach the Gospel, as it is important for the salvation of others. The word will accomplish God's purpose in *you* and in the unsaved to whom you preach."'

A buoyant and cheery optimism and a strong faith have always been strikingly characteristic of Griffith John; and he must have needed all the help these qualities could give during the first few months after he settled in Hankow. The strain on faith and courage must have been even greater on Mrs. John than on him. Their colleague and his wife had not yet joined them. They and their two young children were housed in uncomfortable and insanitary quarters. There was no one in all the multitude who inhabited the great city who had any sympathy with their objects except their native Christian house-boy. Even the two faithful native assistants who did such splendid service only followed them from Shanghai after four months! The sense of loneliness, the hunger for sympathetic fellowship, which is so often experienced by struggling strangers in a great city, must at times have been well-nigh overwhelming. The Christian pioneer in uncivilised countries has much to try his faith and patience, but he has in most cases plenty to do and to occupy his attention in various manual labours and in efforts to provide for his own needs and comforts. In a Chinese city these diversions of thought were entirely unknown.

Moreover, the opening of foreign trade and the settlement of foreign merchants brought to Hankow a new era of commercial prosperity and an increased sense of security from the rebels, the results of which

were speedily apparent. Trade 'boomed,' and the busy city was absorbed in making money. It was not a time to yield to spiritual influences. They came and heard the foreign preacher and his helpers, they accepted the books and tracts which were given, and many seemed interested. The class that is everywhere ready to profess anything for the sake of gain began to gather round, but for six months there was not a single convert. Is it surprising that the shadow of disappointment began to cloud the heart of the earnest worker, and that once again, as in Shanghai, he became depressed.

Two glimpses of this side of his feelings appear in his letters in 1862. The first is to Mr. Jacob, under date May 19:—

'Oh, 'tis trying to one's faith to work in China. The missionary lives here on faith only. Little or nothing has he to encourage him in his labours. The people are dead in their sins. They listen, they ask a few questions, they express their satisfaction, they compliment you and your doctrine, and they leave as little moved as the benches on which they have been sitting. You may see them again, or you may not; but whether you do or do not, it comes to the same thing finally. It is very hard, brother. Don't think, however, that I am discouraged. No. I trust by the grace of God that I never shall faint. I believe still, because God hath spoken it. My faith has been sorely tried since my arrival in China. Being naturally of a sceptical turn of mind, the devil has been ever suggesting all sorts of doubts and perplexities. I am

glad to be able to inform you, however, that most of these doubts have passed away. God has enabled me to fight and to win, and though I thought myself when in England much stronger than I think myself now to be, still I know that I am really much stronger now than I was then. The mission-field is a splendid school for a higher and a better state of existence. Looking on the present as a state of probation, of moral and spiritual training, I cannot but thank God for bringing me here.'

A little later Mr. John wrote to Dr. Tidman :—

'We have had several inquirers since my arrival. Some of them *seemed* to be in earnest, but have left the place. Some have come forward from worldly motives, and, being disappointed, have forsaken us. Two or three hundred cash a week have a greater attraction to a Chinaman than the salvation of his soul. Were the former held up as an inducement, it would be easy to make thousands of nominal Christians within a comparatively short period. Not long since, a smart country boy, of about eighteen, presented me with a letter. On reading it I found that he wished to be instructed in the Christian religion, with the view of entering the Church. I spoke a few words to him, and advised him to come and listen to the daily preaching. Some days after he came again and presented me with another note. I requested the native preacher to make inquiries into the history, character, and intentions of the boy. In the course of conversation he found that some of the country people had got the impression that all who became nominal Christians

received a small quantity of rice *per diem*, and that this boy was sent by them to make the experiment, with the view of following him, should it prove successful. No sooner was he undeceived in the matter than he disappeared altogether.

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'My dear brother, the conversion of China is a difficult task—as difficult as it is certain. We must not shut our eyes to the fact. In one sense much has been done; in another, very little. We have hardly touched the *Empire* yet. China is hardly conscious of our presence. Before the work is accomplished the Church must advance her gold and silver with a far more liberal hand than she has done, and young men of piety and character must come forth in far greater numbers than they do at present. The conversion of China will cost the Church her treasures, the Colleges their brightest ornaments, and the Missions the lives of their best men. Unless we are all prepared for this we had better give it up. If our brethren at home knew what it was to contend with the power of darkness, as concentrated in the form of Paganism, as it is developed in China, they would certainly send out men by hundreds and not tens. Excuse this, I speak it feelingly.'

Sunday, March 16, 1862, was a day to be remembered in the Hankow Mission. The first Protestant convert in Central China was then baptized. He was followed in June by six others, four men and two women. One of the men baptized on this day was a type of a class of whom there appear to be

many in China. 'He had been quite an ascetic and devotee. He had long been seeking moral renovation through the discipline of the sect of Kwan-yin, a sect which in this province is very numerous and has comparatively high aims. He seemed as though he had deeply felt a spiritual want, but had not been able to meet with anything to satisfy it until the light of Christian truth shone in his mind.'

The infant Church was now constituted. By the end of the year there were eleven converts. A small beginning certainly, but the earnest of greater things to come. There has never been a year since with so small a record. As the work extended into the district, the numbers in the Christian community have steadily and in recent years have rapidly increased. The baptisms last year (1905) in Hankow, and in the wide district which regards Hankow as its centre, numbered hundreds, and the membership of the Church has grown to about 6500.

Mr. John commenced for the benefit of this little company of eleven those literary labours which since then have become so valuable a part of his work for China, and have made him a power for good to thousands who have never seen him, and who are not in any way connected with the Mission of which he is so distinguished a representative. He prepared a small collection of hymns in what is known as easy Wen-li, 'in such a style as to be intelligible to all, without violently offending the taste of the refined in letters.' He 'also prepared a tract or pamphlet for circulation, written with a view of answering the

questions and meeting the objections which are not uncommonly propounded by those who listen to the preaching of the Gospel here.'

One of the earliest needs of the Mission was better accommodation alike for worship and for residence. The former need was supplied by the erection of a chapel in one of the best main thoroughfares and in the heart of the city. It was opened in June 1863, and became at once the centre of greatly increased interest and work. For house accommodation the Mission was fortunate in obtaining a plot of land in the newly formed British Concession to the north of the city and adjoining the city boundary. Here two houses were erected, not a day too soon. Already two infant children of Mr. and Mrs. John had been taken from the insanitary surroundings of the temporary habitation to the home in Heaven, and just before the Mission families moved into their new abodes the Rev. Robert Wilson died of dysentery.

Mr. John summed up the news very laconically in a note to Mr. Jacob:—'Events of great importance have recently happened. About a month ago we opened our new chapel, on the 21st [August 1863] we entered our new house, on the morning of the 24th my dear wife presented me with a charming daughter, on the morning of the 12th inst. my dear brother and colleague, Mr. Wilson, died.' He goes on to say: 'I rejoice greatly that we are in our new abode. You can have but the faintest conception of the sort of houses we have had to put up with during the last two years and a half. They are most dangerous to us as

foreigners in such a climate as this. Neither is possible for any one at home to form the slightest conception of the difficulties and trials we have had in the erection of our houses. I believe that, humanly speaking, my friend Wilson's death is to be ascribed to a very great extent to the circumstances in which we have been placed.'

What these circumstances were may be gathered from a sentence in a letter written by the Rev. Josiah Cox, the Wesleyan missionary, to Mrs. Wilson's parents informing them of her husband's death :—

'When I came up here a stranger missionary of another name and Society, Mr. Wilson did me great kindness. Though occupying but the half of a house of very small dimensions, he placed his study at my disposal, and helped me in every way. I became a member of his family, and soon admired and honoured him.'

Half a house of very small dimensions, up a lane in a crowded part of a Chinese city, in a country where, during the long steamy summer, the thermometer stands at 98° to 100° in the shade for weeks ! Certainly the circumstances were not the most favourable. They were, however, unavoidable in the early days of the Mission, so they were accepted cheerfully, and there is not a word of complaint, or even of reference to the matter, in any of the correspondence.

There are some, not only of the critics of Missions, but also among those who are sincerely interested in them, and anxious for their success, who speak as if there was some special appropriateness and virtue in

housing a missionary in cramped and uncomfortable quarters in the midst of a crowded native city. They are horrified at the expenditure required to provide an airy, roomy, sanitary dwelling, away from the crowd. They even wax sarcastic over the luxury and self-indulgence involved in making the dwelling as comfortable and home-like as possible consistently with limited means, and they contrast the barrack-like arrangements of the accommodation of the Roman Catholic celibate missionaries with the cheerful and attractive houses of their Protestant brethren, to the detriment of the latter. No missionary worthy of the name would ever refuse to suffer privations or grumble at the most uncomfortable and unsuitable accommodation when privation or discomfort are necessary in the interests of the work, but there is no virtue in wilful martyrdom. A well-built and roomy house is not luxury, but the wisest and best economy for the health of a European in the tropics; and taste and comfort in the furnishing and decoration of rooms have a very real, if only an indirect, value as a means of rest and refreshment to the spirit jaded by labour, or worn by anxiety and opposition.

After the death of the Rev. Robert Wilson, the small European community in Hankow gave a very practical and kindly proof of their sympathy with the missionaries by contributing no less than 5000 taels as a fund for the help of the young widow and her two little children, who were sent home to England.

By the death of Mr. Wilson the whole burden of work and anxiety fell upon his colleague once more,

and from a very sad and unexpected cause he was destined to continue for some time without help. He wrote to Dr. Tidman announcing Mr. Wilson's decease, and three months later he wrote again as follows:—

'I hope to hear soon that you are sending some one out to join me. Hankow is far too important a place to be left for any length of time with one missionary. Between the Chinese and English work I have quite as much as I can do, more than I can do well. But I am anxious to extend our operations to the regions beyond, and this cannot be done whilst I am alone. Do then send me a man as soon as you possibly can. I hope to be able to write you in full by the next mail. The work is progressing very encouragingly in Hankow. Though often saddened for want of more and greater visible, tangible results, still I look forward hopefully. The Spirit of God is working in Hankow, and there are among us some who have been born again. But, oh! we want more men and better men to take up the work. Hankow has been open now for nearly three years, and Christendom has sent only three men to occupy this most important and inviting sphere. At this moment I am alone, and am likely to be so for some months.'

In response to this appeal, the Directors took what in those days was an unusual step. They appointed Mr. William Wells, M.D., as a medical missionary to Hankow. Dr. Wells left England in July 1864, but died at sea on October 25, before the vessel reached China. The disappointment was very keen, especially as in the interval it had become necessary for Mrs.

John to proceed to England. She had been nine years in China without change of climate, and under conditions which must have made heavy demands upon her. Moreover, their second boy was at an age when the parents felt he ought to be taken away from the sights and sounds and influences of native life, and placed at school in the more pure and wholesome atmosphere of the home land. It had, therefore, been arranged that his mother should, for her own sake and for his, take him to England, and Mr. John was left for a year quite solitary. He looked forward eagerly to the arrival of his new colleague, and when the news of his death reached Hankow his feelings found expression in another letter to the Secretary of the Society:—

'Again has one of my brightest hopes been dashed to the ground. For what purpose I am utterly unable to conjecture. "Clouds and darkness are round about Him." How we are made to feel this from time to time. Useless and faithless men are permitted to live, whilst the good and the true are taken away. Is it because the earth is cursed? Why? Why? Why? This everlasting Why? keeps ringing in my ears; but the responsive "because" never comes. That sleeps in the bosom of the Eternal. How crooked do God's ways often appear unto us! How differently would we act if the government was on our shoulders! Let me, however, bless God for faith—that faith which enables me to believe "that I am foolish and blind, and that God is all-wise and all-seeing; that I am wrong, and that He, the ever-blessed One, is everlastingly just and true. Here alone can repose be found.

Truly, faith is the gift of God. Heaven-born it must be.'

'My dear brother, I need not remind you of the kind of men heathendom needs. Godly, devoted, earnest-minded men are the only men that will do. We decry not genius—the loftier, if sanctified, the better. We undervalue not culture—the more perfect, if laid on the altar, the more valuable and beautiful. Still, we can do without genius; we can do without the highest form of culture; but we cannot do without piety and devotedness.'

When the news of the death of Dr. Wells reached England, the Directors of the Society at once sought for another worker. Their choice fell upon the Rev. Evan Bryant, whose appointment gave Mr. John special satisfaction, because he also was a Welshman, a native of Glamorganshire, and a student in Brecon College. It is a striking illustration of the great change that has taken place in the last forty years in the means of locomotion, and as the result of the opening of the Suez Canal, that his voyage from England to Shanghai occupied *six* months. Though he sailed from England in August 1865, he did not reach Hankow until the end of February 1866. With the exception of a brief interval between 1873 and 1875, when he acted as *locum tenens* for the Rev. Jonathan Lees in Tientsin, Mr. Bryant continued to work in connection with the Hankow Mission until 1880. The state of Mrs. Bryant's health rendering it inexpedient for her to risk further residence in China, Mr. Bryant retired from the Mission in 1880. Sub-



sequently, from 1884 to 1892, he acted as the agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society in North China.

A year after Mr. Bryant came, the Mission was further reinforced by the arrival of the Rev. T. Bryson in January 1867. Mr. Bryson took up his abode on the opposite side of the river, in the newly opened station at Wuchang. His connection with the Mission in Central China continued until 1884, when he was transferred to Tientsin, where he has been labouring ever since. The intimate fellowship which close association in work during those seventeen years made possible makes Mr. Bryson's reminiscences of his senior colleague peculiarly valuable. He writes as follows:—

'Like the late Dr. Muirhead of Shanghai, with whom he was associated in the early years of his life in China, Dr. John stands out pre-eminently as a vernacular preacher of the Gospel. I have often heard him say that not a single day of the year passed without his proclaiming the evangel either in street or chapel. At the Chinese New Year holidays, when most missionaries are only too glad to find relief from the routine of their daily life by making up arrears in correspondence, Dr. John was accustomed to lead a band of volunteer preachers into every district, street, and alley of the city. His iron constitution in those days, and his consuming zeal, enabled him to go everywhere preaching the Gospel. There were no sanatoriums for missionaries in China then, no cooling retreats from the heat of summer on hilltop or by the sea. Only when severe sickness compelled a man did he leave his station or take his family to the coast. Dr. John used

to say that the only change he ever needed was a missionary tour into the country. His unrivalled knowledge of the Chinese language and his fluency as a speaker made work of this kind a pleasure both to himself and his hearers.

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'I need hardly say I have always regarded it as a great honour to have been associated with Dr. John for nearly twenty years, and that my first lessons as a missionary were learned under such a master. My first vocabulary as a preacher was almost entirely acquired by listening to his Sunday morning addresses in the old city chapel, Hankow. Well do I remember these happy days when, released from my solitary life during the week in Wuchang, I crossed the river each Sunday with a few converts, and spent the day in Dr. John's company, learning from many a quiet talk the lessons of his ripe experience in Christian life and missionary service.

'We made many journeys together up and down the Yang-tse in a boat that at that time belonged to the Mission, and was the gift of the English community. We were many a time besieged by a clamorous crowd soon after daylight, and had literally no leisure so much as to eat. Our reception, while generally favourable, was sometimes of a most hostile character, and we had to beat a hasty retreat, seldom, however, before our message had been delivered and many Gospels had been sold.

'If there is one impression on my mind deeper than another of Dr. John's countenance and conduct, it is



seriousness. Levity is as far from him as from a Chinese sage. He was always serious, always earnest, always at work. Amid the beauties of mountain and river scenery, with a glorious sunshine over all, as our mission boat glided down the placid waters of the Yang-tse, I well remember one Sunday morning our standing on the deck and singing together—

> When Thou my righteous Judge shalt come
> To fetch Thy ransomed people home,
> Shall I among them stand?

'This was the habitual attitude of John's mind. His outlook on life was cheerful, but it was always serious.'

CHAPTER VIII

DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION

THE early years of the Mission were a time of great and permanent importance. The energy and enterprise of the young missionary were constant and tireless, and he had the power of communicating his enthusiasm to all who came within the sphere of his influence. At the same time he did not allow himself to be ensnared by that great peril of the man of active and energetic habit, constantly occupied with the claims of practical work, of becoming so absorbed in multifarious duties and enterprises as to have no time or energy left for self-culture and study. He was already a great reader and a careful student. He succeeded, amidst the ever-growing claims of a work whose initiation and development depended on him, in making time for regular and careful reading, and during those early days toiled at the preparation of a Chinese dictionary which was never published, but must have been of no small value to him in that great literary work which in after years has made such demands upon him. His self-imposed duties in maintaining weekly religious services for the benefit of the Europeans who had come to Hankow were maintained



with regularity and in no perfunctory fashion for four years. Those labours were richly blessed, first to members of his congregation, and then to the Mission. When this work came to an end for a time through the establishment of a regular chaplaincy he was able to write to Mr. Jacob:—

'The Rev. Mr. M'Clatchie has arrived at the port as chaplain for the foreign community. For four years the principal part of the work has devolved upon me, and for a year the whole of it. The Society has lost nothing by the time I have given to English preaching, but the contrary. I am not conscious of having neglected a single duty as a missionary in connection with it. In a financial point of view the Society has gained much. Including the money subscribed for Mrs. Wilson, towards the chapel in Wuchang, the schools on this side, etc., I find that I have received from the comparatively small community no less a sum than Tls.8000 = more than £2500. I refused at the commencement to receive a salary, and they have shown their gratitude by giving towards the cause a larger sum than a handsome salary would have been.

'You will be pleased to learn that a very kindly feeling exists here now towards missionaries and their work. It was not so formerly, but it is emphatically so at present. In this respect Hankow contrasts very favourably with most of the other ports. Above all, I have every reason to believe that my ministrations have been blessed to many souls, and that the moral and spiritual tone of the whole community would not have

been what it is were it not for these means of grace. I did not, however, covet the work, and now I am glad that it is over. From the beginning it has been my desire to give my whole time and attention to my missionary duties. There is no other work that I love so well, and I hope that my passion for it will now be gratified to the full.'

It was not long after the despatch of this letter before there was a further and even more valuable manifestation of good-will on the part of some of the foreign residents. Mr. John wanted to build a chapel on the Mission compound, and, on appealing for help, got the hint that if he would enlarge his scheme and provide for a hospital as well as a chapel, the money for both would be forthcoming. Better still, Dr. Arthur G. Reid, the physician of the European community, offered his services gratuitously on two days in the week for dispensary and hospital work. The hospital was built, £400 being provided for building and furnishing it, and Dr. Reid proved a most sympathetic and valuable helper for nearly two and a half years, when he was able to hand over the work to Dr. Shearer, who was sent out as a medical missionary, and joined the Mission in October 1868. Dr. Shearer, however, gave up mission work in less than two years, and settled at Kiu-kiang in foreign practice. Thereupon Dr. Reid renewed his help and continued it for five years longer, being instrumental meanwhile in the erection of a much larger and more suitable hospital, which he had the pleasure of handing over to Dr. Kenneth Mackenzie. The medical branch of the

Mission was thus firmly established, to the great satisfaction of the missionary leader, and it has steadily grown in influence and importance ever since. In Hankow itself there is, in connection with the London Mission, a large and well-equipped general hospital and a woman's hospital, and in the other central stations which have sprung out of the work which Dr. John commenced, and of which he is still the beloved and honoured leader, there are five general hospitals, one woman's hospital, and one leper asylum. Upwards of 350 beds are provided for in-patients, and ten fully qualified medical missionaries are at work. A Medical School in Hankow for the training of Christian natives in order to qualify them to become medical evangelists is the latest development of this work.

The school necessarily follows the Church in the missionary economy. Within six months of the formation of the Church at Hankow a school for boys was begun. It was not large; some months after it was opened there were only forty boys in it, and the instruction given would scarcely have satisfied the most rudimentary ideas of education in Western lands. For a boy to have distinguished himself by his attainments in arithmetic or history or geography would have gained him no honour in Chinese circles. All Western knowledge was at a discount, and teaching had to be on Chinese lines if it was to be of any value in after life.

The school was, however, an opportunity of getting the boys under Christian instruction, and training them up in the knowledge of the Scriptures. The one small

school soon grew to three and then to five, and a daring innovation was attempted in the gathering of a few little girls for instruction under the care of an earnest Christian woman. Mr. John could not have dreamed that he would live to see the day when the views of the Chinese on education would be so completely changed that even the great system of examinations—by means of which men rise from step to step in honour and influence, to the highest posts of the government, and the character of which has been fixed by immemorial custom—has been altered; when in Hankow, as elsewhere throughout China, large numbers of the most energetic and promising young men are crying out for Western education; and when one of the most serious needs of the Mission is that the High School, which already exists, should be rebuilt and thoroughly well equipped on Western lines, together with a Normal School for training native teachers.

The first definite extension of work beyond Hankow itself was made at the beginning of 1864 by the settlement of one of the first native helpers at the town of Tsai-tien, about twenty miles up the Han river. This place was famed for the number of its scholars, and the people were proud and conservative. They resented the intrusion of the Christian evangelist, and persecution commenced. The Christian religion was violently abused, and scurrilous placards were issued. Finally the evangelist was arrested and sent down to Hankow on false and malicious charges.

Griffith John has always determinedly opposed the use of foreign influence in the Christian Church for the



purpose of helping professed converts in their lawsuits; but he has never been slow to stand by those who were persecuted. He insisted on having the case thoroughly investigated. The result was that the policeman and the witnesses against the evangelist utterly broke down and confessed that the accusation was entirely false. He went back to his post and began at once to reap the fruit of his labours and sufferings in the gathering in of converts who had been afraid before to confess their faith in Christ.

In the following year another advance of a similar kind was made to King-kow, a busy town on the Yang-tse, about twenty miles above Hankow, by the settlement there of another native worker. This extension was begun by Dr. John with high hope, for his ardent spirit was ever looking beyond his immediate surroundings to the vast unoccupied field, and longing to extend the knowledge of Christ among the unreached multitudes in Central China. He wrote home after King-kow was occupied :—

'This station and Tsai-tien are both important in reference to the regions beyond. We have now taken possession of both streams, and it is our duty never to rest until we reach their sources. I trust the day is not very far distant when the banks of the Yang-tse and the Han shall be lined with temples reared to the Lord of Hosts. The difficulties are many and formidable. I see them and feel them. They sometimes rise before me like huge mountains whose summits are lost in impenetrable clouds. They seem to defy our puny efforts to remove them or even to scale them.

Still I believe that those obstacles shall be removed, and that righteousness and peace shall flow through these regions like a stream some day.'

The experience gained in these two experiments was not encouraging, but it was useful. It led Mr. John and his colleagues to review their ideas of the best method of extension, and they adopted a general principle of very great value in the subsequent development of the Mission. Writing on January 12, 1869, Mr. John says:—

'From the report of the Hankow Mission forwarded by this mail, you will learn that our out-stations Tsai-tien and King-kow have been given up. It was after much anxious deliberation that we came to the conclusion it was our duty to take this step.

'King-kow has been a most barren field from the beginning. Only one has joined us there. At first the success at Tsai-tien was marked; but for three years we have reaped hardly any fruits of our labour there. The converts that were made there in the previous years have nearly all left the place. Several of them are living in and around Hankow. Some are residing about ten miles above Tsai-tien. Two are dead. There are only two who reside constantly at the town itself. Thus there is no Church there to be watched over at present. I have no fault to find with the native assistants. They seem to have discharged their duties conscientiously on the whole.

'I have come to the conclusion that our system was wrong and ought to be done away with. These out-stations ought not to be established as experiments,

neither ought they to be supported by the Society. They ought rather to spring up in connection with the widespread progress of the work, supported by the native Christians themselves, and only superintended by the foreign missionary with the view of rendering to them the necessary spiritual guidance and aid. I am fully convinced now that this is the principle on which we should conduct the branch work of our respective Missions; and, as the condition of these two stations was such as to allow of our returning to sound principles, without even temporary injury accruing therefrom to the cause, I feel that, in casting the old plan aside, we are only doing what accords best with the Apostolic example and the dictates of common sense. I need not tell you that it has cost me something to give up these stations. Still I believe that the right thing has been done, and that we may expect the divine blessing to rest more conspicuously upon us and our work. We shall still visit both places often, and, personally, we shall do as much as ever for them. If any good impressions have been left by the work of the past, we shall not fail to find the cases out.'

The after story of the spread of the sacred fire from village to village and from county to county in Hupeh is one of profound interest and suggestiveness, and it is a very strong argument in favour of the soundness of the principle adopted by Mr. John and his colleagues.

Another and much more important extension of the Mission claimed Mr. John's attention, and tried all his powers of persistency and of tact for several months in 1864. The city of Wuchang, on the opposite side of

the river, was not a treaty port to which foreigners of all kinds were free to come, and in which they had a right to settle and to trade without let or hindrance. It was, however, one of the most important governmental and literary centres in China, and on this account it seemed most desirable that it should be made a centre of Christian teaching. By the treaty of 1869, British missionaries had acquired, in consequence of a privilege conceded to Roman Catholic missionaries in the French treaty, the right to purchase and hold property in places other than the treaty ports. Of course the difficulty was to obtain the property.

Mr. John sent his native assistant across to buy land and a house, but as soon as it was known for what purpose it was wanted no one would sell. Mr. John then took the matter in hand himself, and the story of his interviews with officials, from the Viceroy downwards, and of the shifts and subterfuges to which they resorted to put him off and to prevent him from attaining his end, is extremely interesting and amusing as an illustration of the ways of Chinese officialism. Unfortunately for them, their case was really indefensible, from the fact that the Roman Catholic Mission was already settled in the city; so the determined but patient and polite missionary gained the day at last with all its important results. He writes:—

'Such was the end of nearly four months' conflict with these Mandarins — men almost incapable of speaking the truth or of acting honestly. The native evangelist and the deacon had many an anxious hour; and it was as much as I could do to keep their spirits

up. Frightened by adverse reports from Wuchang, they would come sometimes at midnight for consolation. But though the struggle was rather irksome at the time, I am glad of it now. It gave the Mandarins, scholars, and gentry an opportunity of venting their wrath in a concentrated form. Ever since they have been as quiet and urbane as possible. It also made the triumph known far and wide. It is known over the whole province that the Mandarins opposed in vain, and that the conflict ended in their issuing a proclamation to inform the people that what I had done and was proposing to do had their sanction. This fact will make it much easier to commence the work in the surrounding cities. To open Wuchang is, in principle, to open the whole province. To have failed there would have made failure elsewhere almost inevitable. I have, from the beginning, attached the greatest importance to this undertaking, and now I feel thankful to God that my efforts have been crowned with success. I must also inform you that H.B.M. Consul helped me to the utmost extent of his power. If he had frowned on the attempt, the Mandarins would have been victorious. I feel greatly indebted to him for his sympathy and efficient aid.'

By the kindness of the European community at Hankow, buildings which cost £500 were at once erected and work commenced. Mr. John sent over Mr. Pau Ting Chang to occupy the place as native evangelist, and when Mr. Bryson arrived two years after he made it his home.

Mr. Pau was one of a remarkable group of Chinese

converts whom, from the very beginning of his work in Hankow, Dr. John has succeeded in gathering about him. If any one doubts the capacity of the Chinese to become strong, intelligent, devoted Christians and enthusiastic and able workers, let him learn the history of the men who during the last forty years have been the fruit of the Central China Mission of the London Missionary Society. The secret is that their leader has believed in them, has seen the best in them, and has thus drawn the best out of them.

Mr. Pau of Wuchang 'was formerly a prosperous merchant; and in his lifetime has seen a great deal of the Chinese world. He seems satiated with the vanities and follies of life, and is anxious to spend the remainder of his days in cultivating his own spirit and bringing others into the way of truth. His native sagacity and quiet manner, together with his kindliness of heart and undoubted sincerity, make him an agent of great and peculiar worth to the Society. He is also blessed with an excellent wife. She is a genuine Christian, and in perfect sympathy with her husband in his evangelistic labours. Whilst he is trying to influence the men, she is ever active in attempting to direct the thoughts of the women to their highest concerns. It is deeply interesting, too, to observe the truly Christian way in which they bring up their child. I doubt whether there are many families in England in which the flame of devotion burns more brightly and constantly than in the family of Pau Ting Chang.'

This faithful worker was spared to labour on in connection with the Mission in Wuchang for upwards



of forty years. He died in the summer of 1900, and the Rev. Arnold Foster, who had known him for nearly thirty years of that long and honourable service, wrote :—

'He had gained the respect and affection of the Chinese Church, and of every missionary who has had the pleasure of working with him, as well as of all other missionaries of other Societies who knew him. He died during last summer after a few days' illness, in the ninetieth year of his age. Almost to the last he used to go regularly to the street chapel to preach to passers-by, but for some time his eyesight had failed him, and he had daily to be led to and from the chapel.'

Another notable man of those early days of the Mission was Mr. Shen Tsi Sing. He followed Mr. John from Shanghai when he first came to Hankow, having been his Chinese teacher and then the teacher of Mr. Wilson. He was a scholar of no mean ability, and his history had been a remarkable one before he found light and rest in Christ.

When Mr. Shen died in 1887, Mr. John wrote concerning him :—

'The venerable Shen Tsi Sing deserves a special mention. He was my helper as a teacher, as a writer, and as a preacher for thirty years. In the preparation of every book, except one, composed or translated by me, Mr. Shen acted as my pundit. He was with me at the founding of this Mission ; and the Mission's prosperity is greatly to be ascribed to the deep interest he felt in it, and the efficient help he rendered to it.

He was a man universally respected by the Christians and the heathen of the place. I loved, respected, and trusted him as I have never done any other Chinaman In his best days he was a man of great force and energy. Some years ago he had a stroke of paralysis and was never the same after. Latterly he was very feeble and helpless. He was also severely tried by the evil ways of certain members of his family. At the beginning of last year he left Hankow for Nanking his native city. I sent a man with him to take charge of him on the way, and to attend to his wants at Nanking. This man returned on November 14 with the news that my dear old friend had passed off on the 7th of the same month. Some say that the scholars of China can never be won over by Christianity. Mr. Shen was not only a scholar, but also a scholar universally respected for his learning, ability, and character; and yet he was as genuine a Christian as I have ever seen. He believed in Jesus with all his intellect and heart, and it was his delight for years to stand up in the chapels, in the streets, and in the temples and preach Christ and Him crucified. I never saw him show the least fear or shame when preaching Christ or speaking of Christ. May God raise up many more like Mr. Shen in connection with all the Churches in this land!'

The Rev. Gilbert Warren, the head of the Central China Wesleyan Mission, has already been quoted with reference to Mr. John's gifts as a preacher. He also bears warm testimony to his genuine kindness and helpfulness to missionaries of other Societies, and as



an illustration of this he tells the story of another native worker.

When Mr. Cox, the first Wesleyan missionary in Central China, was welcomed in Hankow by Mr. John in 1862, he asked if he could find him a Chinaman who could be his teacher, and at the same time help him in his work.

'Dr. John at once produced his small Church-roll and bade Mr. Cox select whomsoever he would. He selected Chu-Sao-an, who had been baptized by Dr. John on April 23, 1862, the "first-fruits of Hupeh," and the forerunner of all the thousands of Protestant Christians now spread over the nine or ten provinces that cluster round this centre of Central China.

'Mr. Chu both taught and learnt much with Mr. Cox, and in due course he was ordained to the Wesleyan Methodist ministry, again taking a first place, and indeed for many years the only place, in the ordained ministry. A quotation from Mr. Chu's obituary in the *Minutes of Conference* for 1900 (pp. 41-43) will show how Methodism profited by the generosity of Dr. John :—"During the past twenty-four years Mr. Chu's ministry has been exercised chiefly in Wuchang, and the fruits of his labours are seen in the Church which has grown in numbers year by year. As a preacher he has no peer in the ranks of the Chinese Church in Central China; his power of illustration, especially, was unrivalled. He made a wide and varied reading pay tribute to his congregations; Christian magazine or Confucian classic alike had to render up its store of things new and old to this wise

householder, who verily had a treasury of such riches. He earned the unfeigned respect of his European colleagues by a blameless life and unimpeachable integrity. . . . The end of his illness came unexpectedly on October 21, 1899."'

These, then, are but early examples of a remarkable succession of earnest and often able men who have worked and are still working in connection with various Missions in Central China, and who have come under the influence of this great leader.

The most important work of those early days in the Mission was the consolidation and development of the Church, and in this the character and enthusiasm of the missionary were communicated to his flock very markedly. From the first the members were taught the privilege and duty of contributing according to their ability to the support of worship and the help of the needy. They were also made to realise that every Christian should be directly concerned in bringing others to Christ. The teaching bore rich and rapid fruit. Five years after the first converts were baptized the number in Christian fellowship had risen to 108, of whom 51 were baptized during 1867. Of these 51, Mr. John says in his annual report:—

'Not a few of them have been brought into the Church through the instrumentality of private members. Jen-ki-pu, a carpenter, has been the means of bringing in seven. For five years he has been one of our most active, consistent, and prayerful men. Earnestly has he been striving to influence his comrades and

employees. Though a poor man, he has often supplied his workmen with rice on the Sundays gratuitously, in order to keep them from working on that holy day. Till latterly many of his relations and friends fancied that a species of madness had taken possession of him. He would do nothing, they said, but read his New Testament, pray, and talk to people about their souls and Jesus Christ the Saviour. This year, however, it has been his great privilege to reap the fruit of his labours.

'But he is not the only one who has been helping on the work. Other of the members also have brought in their threes, twos, or ones. This is one of the most encouraging features connected with the work of the year. We may well look forward to more prosperous times, when the members themselves begin to take up the work and make it their own. We rejoice in this fact the more because it is difficult to get the private members of a Church to feel that they have anything actively to do with the propagation of the Gospel. As they do not concern themselves in the least with the politics of the country, but leave such things with the Mandarins, who are paid for looking after them, so they are disposed to rest quietly in the personal enjoyment of religion, and leave the propagation of it to the foreign missionary and the paid native agents. It is gratifying to us to observe at this early stage in the Mission a different spirit springing up and gradually diffusing itself abroad. Most of the members seem to think that they must do something to assist the work that is going on in their midst. They evidently feel

proud of their laudable endeavours to make it a glory and a praise in the centre of China.'

One happy result of the consolidation and development of the Church was seen in the gathering of women into the membership. The Chinese ideas of propriety in regard to the appearance of women in public assemblies is still respected in many Christian Churches in China, either by the provision of a separate gallery or apartment for the women separated from the main body of the place of worship by a substantial grille, or else by the erection of a solid partition several feet high, down the centre of the chapel, by means of which men and women are entirely separated and cannot see each other. In the early days of the Church, in every place the men were reached first in the public preaching-halls, and were gathered into the membership of the Church before the women. There is, therefore, special significance in the following paragraph:—

'One interesting fact connected with these fifty-one members is that thirteen of them are women, and that eleven of the thirteen are the wives of converts. The conversion of the female population of China is a subject which must weigh heavily and constantly on the heart of every earnest missionary. The obstacles are many and formidable. Both by preaching and private conversation, for nearly six years, I have been labouring to impress on the minds of the converts the duty and importance of bringing their wives under the direct influence of the Gospel. They would maintain that the custom of the country was against it. To

attend chapel and join the men in public worship would bring not only the wife, but the whole family, into contempt, and so on.

'Last year there were evident signs of a movement in the right direction; and this year the result has far exceeded my most sanguine expectations. Nineteen women have already been received into the Church, several are now coming in, and we have every reason to hope that most of the wives of the converts who reside in and around Hankow will be identified with us before the end of next year. There are now several whole families in the Church, and it is getting to be generally understood that it is the solemn duty of the Christian member of a family to make the salvation of every member of that family a matter of deep personal concern.'

The zeal of the converts for the extension of the kingdom of Christ speedily found expression in united effort to reach their heathen neighbours as well as in the earnestness of individual members. Writing to Dr. Mullens in May 1867, Mr. John says:—

'You will be pleased to learn that a new preaching-station has been established at Han-yang, and is supported entirely by the native Church here. They have taken it up warmly, and are determined to carry it through. We have in hand more than Tls.100 for purchasing land and building. This will show you that I have not neglected to teach them the importance of contributing towards the support of the cause, and that they have been learning the lesson gradually.'

CHAPTER IX

YET FURTHER AFIELD

AFTER Mr. Bryant and Mr. Bryson had become fairly settled at work, Mr. John felt he could with greater freedom extend his own evangelistic efforts beyond the limited area of the two cities. His European friends in the Settlement presented him with a river-boat, suitable for itinerating work, and he made frequent trips on the Han and the Yang-tse, extending from ten days to three weeks. He has maintained this practice of making evangelistic tours in the district throughout the whole of his missionary life; and even now, when travel is more fatiguing to him and his health is a cause of anxiety to those about him, he still goes off three or four times a year for a round of preaching in the villages, confirming the hearts of the disciples, examining candidates for church fellowship, and proclaiming the Gospel to the heathen. His report for the year in which the boat was given to him contained the following important paragraph:—

'An unusual amount of itinerating work has been done this year in connection with our Mission. Some walled cities, and many unwalled towns and villages, have been visited by us on these tours. Copies of the





METHODS OF TRAVEL.

(1) THE SEDAN-CHAIR. (2) BOATS ON THE YANG-TSE.



word of God have been extensively sold, and the Gospel has been widely preached. Our work was carried on sometimes on the road, sometimes in the streets, and sometimes in the temples. Many of these places had never been visited before by any foreigner, and at none of them, so far as we could learn, had the Gospel been preached. At some places the excitement was considerable, but nowhere unmanageable. Now and then an ill-disposed scholar (real or would-be) would take it into his head to insult us, and attempt to excite the ire of the populace against us; but generally one or two well-directed classical quotations sufficed to silence all such, and so turn the laugh upon them as to compel them to retire in confusion. The people conducted themselves very well on the whole. We have been much pleased to find that this important branch of our work can be carried on with so much ease and safety. A certain amount of itineration ought to be done yearly in connection with every station. Its reflex influence on both the missionary and the mission is most healthful and stimulating. It tends to enlarge the ideas, deepen the longings, intensify the ardour, and brace up the nerves of both pastor and people. One often feels at the end of a hundred or two hundred miles' tour, having spent a fortnight or three weeks in preaching from town to town and village to village, that he could dare anything and endure anything. I trust that during the ensuing year we shall be able to prosecute this line of work with much perseverance and energy.'

A letter written to Mr. Jacob nearly two years later

is interesting, not only on account of the impression conveyed by it of the mental and spiritual darkness of heathen life, but also because it reveals the evangelist training his converts to evangelise. A Church composed largely of members who have been encouraged by their leader to take a direct and personal part in evangelisation under his own eye, and with the advantage of his wise counsel, could not fail to be a living, aggressive force in every district and in every circle to which its members belonged.

Mr. John had been telling his friend of domestic troubles. It had been a very sickly season. His children were just recovering from small-pox, his wife was far from well, and he was feeling the need of a complete rest and change. He went on to say:—

'Yet we are able to carry on our work with unabated energy. I have preached four times to-day, and walked ten miles. As I am unable to leave, I feel that it is my duty to try and make the delay conducive to the interests of the work. Circumstances enable me to carry on a plan which I have longed to see executed. For years I have desired to see the converts coming forward and offering their services gratuitously. Five of them have recently done so in a very pleasing way. After the morning service they go each man to a village chosen by himself and there conduct services. Some weeks ago I went with the first of these men, and got a villager to offer a room to conduct divine services. Last Sunday I went with another; and to-day I have been with a third. The young man whom I took to-day is the son of Christian

parents. I knew him and baptized him about nine years ago when a mere boy. He is likely to turn out a bright disciple. It did my heart good to hear him preach to-day. His views are perfectly clear, his earnestness is very marked, and his manner exceedingly agreeable and winning. I was pleased, too, to find a man in the village who had heard the truth at our chapels, and who had acquired a considerable amount of religious information. His views on the existence, unity, and spirituality of God, and of the folly and vanity of idolatry, were clear and accurate. He needed light, however, in respect to Christ and His salvation. I spoke to him at length on this theme, and soon after had the pleasure of hearing him preaching to his fellow-countrymen with much earnestness of manner and clearness of thought. "Jesus," said he, "is God incarnate. Man could not find God, so God came to seek man, and, in order to save him, died for him, and thus bore his burden on the Cross. If you worship the true God, believe in Jesus as the only Saviour, and repent of your sins, you shall go to heaven, etc. etc." In speaking to an old woman, he told her that she knew that he had not worshipped idols for a long time, because he had learnt that idolatry was false. There were others in the villages who had heard the Gospel at our chapels, and who were consequently well disposed towards us. I believe that there are hundreds, if not thousands, around us who have given up idolatry. Constantly am I told by them that they have got so far. Last week a hearer said that he had not worshipped idols for five years.

May the day not be far distant when they shall decide for the Lord.

'You can have no idea of the darkness of the heathen mind without coming in contact with it in this way. To-day I have conversed with many immortal beings who have not the remotest idea of the dignity of their own being and their relation to the Infinite and the Eternal. Their hopes and aspirations do not extend beyond the grave. Those of them who think that the soul is not extinguished in death hope for nothing better than its reappearance on earth in a human form and in a condition of improved happiness. The woman hopes to reappear in the form of a man; the poor man hopes to reappear as a rich man or a Mandarin. They dread to be turned into beasts and reappear as cattle, cats, dogs, mice, vermin, etc. etc. The doors are covered with two large figures called door spirits, and charms, to ward off demons and noxious influences of various kinds. Over the doors you often see a looking-glass; and what think you is the object of it? Well, they say that it is put there in order to frighten the devil by a sight of himself when he attempts to enter the house. Even the devil can find no other way into their houses than by a door, and they fancy that when he discovers himself in the glass he is discovered by the inmates also, and so he takes to his heels.

'I called at a little temple on the top of a hill near the villages, where I met with two Tauist priests. I had a long conversation with them, the substance of which I will now relate in as few sentences as possible.

Hanging from under the roof there were three cones of incense. I asked the priest whence they came, and was informed that they were votive offerings. I asked him again what were the motives of the worshippers in presenting such offerings. The reply was that they sought merit and immortality. He was asked what meaning did he attach to the word immortality. He replied that he meant not dying. "But," said I, "you don't mean to say that those who come here to worship are exempted from death." "Of course they are not," replied he, "it is mere talk. How can ordinary people escape death? Talk, mere talk." "Why did you join the priesthood?" "We are only among the many," was the reply. "True, but you must have been actuated by some motive. Did you become priests in order to gain a worldly advantage?" "No," was their reply, though I feel sure that they were actuated by no other consideration. It is an easy life, and that is what they sought in forsaking the world. "Well," I added, "what was your aim? Was it the desire of happiness in the next world that led you to take the step?" "The next world," said he, "the next world, what do we know about that? We know nothing about that." "Do you know anything about the origin of your religion?" "No, nothing," etc. etc.

'Such are most of the priests of China. They, like the people, are enveloped in thick darkness. All they seek are the necessaries and luxuries of life. Their religion is a delusion and a lie. When are these people as a people to turn to the Lord and worship Him who is a spirit, in spirit and in truth? That day

must come; but when? when? I sometimes seem to think that it can never come. And then I remember that it is not by might nor by power, but by God's Spirit, and I feel encouraged and strengthened.'

Early in 1868 Mr. John started on a pioneering trip of a very different character from his ordinary itinerating tours. The first hint of it in his correspondence appears in letters to Dr. Mullens and Mr. Jacob on the first day of the new year:—'Were it not for the state of the finances,' he writes, 'I would ask your permission to go and try to establish a mission in Cheng-tu, the capital of Sze-Chuen. What say you to my bearing this in mind? Long has it been a cherished prospect of mine.'

The journey up the Yang-tse to Chung-king is constantly being made now, and steamers ply regularly between Hankow and Ichang, which is half way. The scenery of the gorges has become familiar by the pen and pencil of many travellers, all of whom seem to agree that it is of such exceptional grandeur that words altogether fail to convey any adequate sense of its majestic size and wonderful variety of form and colouring. The perils of the journey through 100 miles of rapids, so strong that they tax to the utmost the strength of gangs of as many as 100 trackers towing the boats up from the bank, unfortunately have not been diminished by familiarity, as not a few travellers have discovered to their cost. When Mr. John and his old friend and comrade, Mr. Wylie of Shanghai, adventured the journey in April 1868, very few Europeans, if any, save missionaries of the Roman

Catholic Church, had gone so far, because there was no open port above Hankow at which they could establish themselves. The travellers left Hankow at the beginning of April in a native boat, and on June 7 Mr. John reported himself from Chung-king :—

'It is very slow work, only 721 miles in more than two months. It requires a residence of many years in this antique country, and among this slow and easy-going people, to be able to bear the irritation of such a life with something like patience and resignation. The country through which we have passed, however, is all new to me; and throughout my curiosity has been thoroughly excited and sustained by the various interesting scenes and events which have passed under my notice. On the whole I have greatly enjoyed the trip so far; and I shall always feel thankful that I have gone through this experience. A journey like this writes a new chapter in one's life—a chapter of deep interest, and never to be forgotten.

'We have passed through many scenes of danger on the way. The gorges and rapids are as dangerous as they are grand—fine to look at, but not always comfortable to encounter and pass through. Some of the boats which accompanied us a part of the way have been wrecked, and in one case four lives were lost. We, however, have been highly blessed and tenderly watched over. No harm has been permitted to come nigh unto any of us. To appreciate this blessing one has to pass through the experience.

'We have had many opportunities of doing good. Many cities, towns, and villages have been visited.

Many books have been sold, and many sermons preached. Of course nothing has been done exhaustively, the journey being too long for that. It will take us five months to accomplish our task according to our present plan, and that will be as much time as I can spare. We intend to proceed from Cheng-tu, the capital of Sze-Chuen, to Si-ngan-fu, the capital of Shen-Si, and return to Hankow by the river Han. The whole length will be from 2500 to 3000 miles. I shall feel satisfied if this journey will turn out to be a commencement of good things—the means of directing the thoughts of others to these almost unknown regions, and of exciting the interest of the Protestant Churches in the spiritual welfare of these distant regions.

'Nature in these regions presents a grand spectacle. Every day do we pass through some of the noblest works of God. One's thoughts are powerfully directed to the Infinite and Eternal in beholding these sublime scenes.

'Chung-king is only second to Hankow with regard to population and commerce, whilst it far surpasses it with regard to beauty of scenery. The whole country about here is extremely picturesque and abounding in historical associations of the greatest interest. The Roman Catholics are very numerous in the province, and Chung-king is one of their strongholds. I am told that they have some three or four thousand converts in the city itself. Oh that we could rejoice over scenes connected with our work such as those which I have witnessed in connection with Roman

Catholicism in this province. We must not neglect Sze-Chuen. I hope that we may be the first Protestant mission and I the first Protestant missionary that will take possession of Chung-king in the name of Christ.'

The long and adventurous journey was successfully accomplished, and the two missionaries reached Hankow again on September 2, none the worse for their varied experiences. The interest of the Church in Hankow in this journey was very deep, and expressed itself in a very true and beautiful way. Mr. Bryson, in his report for the year, calls attention to—

'The spirit and conduct of the native Church in relation to the journey. From the first it was evident that a deep interest was taken by them in this extension of the Gospel to the regions beyond. On the day of the departure many of the members met at Mr. John's house to commend their pastor to God's care, and a crowd of believers accompanied him to the ship. Never, from that day until his return five months later, did they forget to make prayer and supplication on his behalf and on behalf of those who should hear the word. The spirit of missionary zeal spread from heart to heart, and a more sustained and fervent interest was felt by many in the spiritual enlargement and welfare of the Church.'

Apparently one at least of the two pioneers had serious doubts as the journey advanced whether he would survive its perils and its strain. Three days after his return to Hankow he wrote to the confidential friend to whom so much of his correspondence has been addressed, in words which afford a glimpse of his inner

thoughts, while there is a tone in them which tells of overstrain :—

'Telling you the truth, my dear brother, I hardly expected to come back. My brightest hope was that God would permit me to see Cheng-tu, where, I thought, I could die in peace, knowing that my grave at that great and distant city would stimulate others to come and occupy it in the name of the Lord. Here I felt a thrill of the true missionary spirit which I value more than many years of ordinary life. Oh that it were with me an abiding sentiment, a ceaseless inspiration. There are, dear friend, two ways of looking at the work: the one is the prudential one which you refer to, and the other is the enterprising, doing, soul-stirring one, of which the great Apostle to the Gentiles is our greatest type and representative. Most modern missionaries are satisfied with the former. I long for the latter.'

Notwithstanding the feeling expressed in the words just quoted, Mr. John was greatly moved by what he had seen, and began to look at the possibility of going forward to the West for further annexation of China in the name of Christ. He was pressed by the Directors of the Society to return to England for rest and change, and his own heart had long been looking wistfully to the possibility of going home for a while. Yet he lingered in China. In March 1869 he told Mr. Jacob that there were rumours of a revision of the treaty at an early date, and of the probable opening of some additional ports, among them Chung-king. He went on to say that if this actually happened he would feel

strongly impelled to go on there. 'I shall probably feel it to be my duty to try and establish a mission there. I long to see the Gospel introduced into Sze-Chuen, and I should consider it a great honour conferred upon me by the Great Head of the Church to be sent there to labour and to suffer for His name's sake.'

This purpose was not encouraged by the Society, and could not be carried out, but he did not cease to urge time after time that a mission should be established at Chung-king, and his joy was great when, twenty years after, he saw the first L.M.S. missionary appointed to Chung-king actually start on his journey thither. 'You may imagine the joy I feel in seeing this long-cherished hope realised. Twenty years is a long time to wait, is it not? Well, I can say to-night, "Bless the Lord, O my soul."'

The influence on the missionary career of Griffith John of this divine ambition to press ever to the front has already been noticed and commented upon. It is well to notice it, and to allow ourselves to come under the spell of this 'heroic passion for saving souls.' Such men increase our responsibilities, but they expand and enrich our life. When the tree ceases to push forth more branches it means that its roots are losing their vitality, and that the time of maturity is the beginning of the process of decay. When the spirit of the pioneer is dead, the Christian Society which has to record the fact begins to write its own epitaph.

Yet the story of Griffith John's career may also provide another and a most helpful and valuable lesson

for many an ardent heart which is chafing under restraints that prevent the realisation of some high and holy ambition in God's service. Sometimes there is much of self-accusation, and sometimes there is great perplexity of thought, because, with the most earnest desire to respond to the call, circumstances seem to make it impossible to obey the heavenly vision. Griffith John has experienced this impulse to go forth to some new enterprise more than once.

When Dr. Mullens was in Hankow in 1865 he discussed with Mr. John the question of commencing a mission in Japan, which was then opening gradually to Christian effort. At once the heart of the missionary leapt to the suggestion, and he declared his readiness to lead such a mission. More than twenty years after his visit to Sze-Chuen, when Hunan became open to missionary effort, largely through his own exertions, again the strong impulse came to be himself the first missionary worker and settle at Chang-sha. No one can doubt that if in any of these cases circumstances had been favourable, and he had obeyed the great impulse, he would have succeeded as he did in the early days at Hankow. But circumstances were not favourable, the impulse had to be restrained, the zeal and enthusiasm had to be made the means of intensifying effort in the sphere in which God had placed him. As the story of his life and labours is reviewed, it becomes abundantly evident that the providence which prevented him from carrying out these great and true impulses had a larger work for him to do at Hankow. Had he gone to Japan or Sze-Chuen or Hunan, he would have



been a splendid pioneer ; but he would never have been able to do that larger and more lasting work by means of his pen which has given him access to the heart of tens of thousands of Chinese, not only in China and Manchuria, but even in distant Australia and America. The frustration by unfavourable health conditions, or lack of means, or some other cause, of an earnest desire to respond to God's call for special service is not to be taken as an evidence that the call was not of God, but that He knows better than we do how and where we can be of the greatest use in relation to that service.

Shortly after his return from his long journey Mr. and Mrs. John and their children removed from Hankow to Wuchang for a time. There was a mission-house there which was occupied only by an unmarried missionary, the Rev. T. Bryson, and in which there was room for them, and the accommodation at Hankow seemed likely to be required for Dr. Shearer, the medical missionary who was on his way from England. A few months later he was driven back to Hankow and to the shelter of a friend's house by a very exceptional flood. As already mentioned, the Yang-tse valley is flooded every summer by the surplus water which falls in the rainy season over the vast area of country which the river drains. In ordinary years the water rises about thirty feet at Hankow, but when the rains have been excessive and the winter snows on distant mountain-ranges have been unusually heavy, the mass of water coming down is greatly increased. In 1866 the river rose more than forty feet. In 1869 the flood was higher still. The

following letters give a vivid idea of the conditions of life in Hankow at the time.

Writing to Dr. Mullens on July 24, 1869, Mr. John says:—

'You were informed by the last mail that the water had risen unusually high, and that Hankow was threatened once more with a flood. Since then the river has been steadily rising and spreading, and to-day it is nearly two feet higher than its highest mark in 1866. The whole of the foreign settlement is from three to eight feet under water. Many of the foreign houses, though erected on well-raised foundations, have been invaded by the unwelcome intruder, and their lower rooms rendered uninhabitable. Goods have been raised above the floors of godowns on wooden stands, and in some cases have been removed into cargo boats. These immense boats, scattered among the hongs, present a novel spectacle. Beyond our verandahs we have not an inch of walking ground at this end of the town, and boating has become our only mode of locomotion. Our mercantile friends have taken to paddling canoes as the only exercise possible in the circumstances, and some of the missionaries are beginning to feel that they can do nothing better than imitate their good example.

'I am glad to be able to add that the foreign merchants at Hankow maintain their character for generosity and liberality in the midst of disappointments and discouragements. Dr. Shearer and myself have just called on the community in behalf of the hospital. Everywhere did we meet with the kindest reception,

and a sum, sufficiently large to cover the current expenses of the institution for the ensuing year, was readily and heartily subscribed. Most seemed to think that it is a privilege to give towards this benevolent object, and to feel thankful for the opportunity afforded them on this occasion of showing their good-will.

'Our work as missionaries has been sadly broken in upon. The hospital, including the preaching-hall attached to it, has been flooded for a week or ten days. No religious services have been held there during this period, and the doctor has not been able to do much in his department. Our chapel in Wuchang is also flooded, and the daily preaching there has been suspended for some days. Our chapel in the centre of the town of Hankow is still high and dry, and the work there has been carried on without interruption by our excellent and faithful native brethren Shen and Yü. On account of the intervening obstacles, we have not been able to visit it as often as we could have wished. Our chapel at Han-yang is above the flood; but the strength of the current, and the strong south wind which prevails at this season of the year, make the attempt to reach it a formidable task. Nevertheless we have been trying to do the little within our power; and we are now longing to see our sphere opening out to its fullest extent once more.

'I was compelled to leave Wuchang yesterday morning with my family and retire to Hankow for a season. We clung to the place till the water had reached to within four inches of our floor. Having no upper rooms to flee to, we were forced to go. Mr. James Crawford,

an old and valuable friend, invited us to come and stay with him. Here I am thankful to say we have found a comfortable home. We have left our furniture behind, hoping to return as soon as circumstances permit.

'Notwithstanding the many inconveniences to which we are put by the flood, and the intense heat, which in the circumstances is felt to be specially trying, the health of all the members of the Mission continues to be good. I am glad to be able to say, too, that our houses, though surrounded, are not flooded. The occupants have still the use of the lower rooms, which is a great boon and comfort to them. Should the water cease to rise, the flood will subside, leaving the lower floors six or seven inches above its highest mark.

'I fear, however, that the houses themselves will suffer considerably. More than half the boundary walls around the foreign compounds have fallen already, and the others will follow as the water retires. Many of the palatial residences in the Settlement are materially and permanently injured, and some of them must be taken down without delay. The amount of damage done in this respect will not be fully seen till the water has fallen some feet below its present mark. I am much concerned about our own houses. The house occupied by myself formerly, and at present by Dr. Shearer, suffered a good deal from the flood in 1866. The foundation has been sinking gradually ever since. The walls are now showing evident signs of a further disturbance, and I think it highly probable that a part, if not the whole, of the block will have to be taken down.

'But if our condition as foreigners is bad, that of the natives is far worse. Thousands of native houses have been rendered uninhabitable, and tens of thousands of the poorest of the people have been driven from their homes. Some have taken refuge on the walls of the cities, and others on the neighbouring hills. From these heights many can see the roofs of their miserable huts just peeping through their watery grave. Others look in vain for their former abodes, the flood having swallowed them up, and for the present obliterated every trace of their existence. Most cling to their cots to the last moment. By means of raised boards and piled-up tables and benches, they continue to live with several feet of water inside their houses. Confined to a very contracted space between the water and the roof, you see them sometimes moving about their huts bent double, and sometimes crawling on all fours as if they were so many quadrupeds. Here and there a faithful dog is to be seen perched on the top of the roof, evidently greatly perplexed to account for this new thing which has happened to the dwellers upon the earth, and wondering where he is to be driven to next.

'It is wonderful, however, how patiently and good-humouredly the Chinaman endures it all. There he is in a state of half-nudity, laughing, punning, gambling, smoking, sipping tea, and merry-making, as if nothing strange had happened to him. In England a calamity of this nature would elicit a universal wail of distress. Here it creates but a slight sensation. The Chinaman seems to think that this calamity, like all others, must come and go, and that when it has done

its work it will leave him pretty much in the same condition as it found him. Two years hence there will be no trace of it. In the meantime he has his bowls of rice and pipe of tobacco, and in the possession of these, with a tolerable appetite, he cares for neither life nor death. As to his mud and straw huts, he will run them up faster than the flood pulled them down. He will soon be in a position to make his hundred or two hundred cash a day, and gradually to pay back the small debt which he is now contracting. Why should he allow himself to be crushed under the weight of heaven's decree? Fate is inevitable, and he must submit to it without a murmur, and bear it without a struggle.

'The present flood is owing principally to the heavy rains which have fallen in Hunan and Kiang-Si. The rise in the Tung-ting lake is caused by the former, that in the Po-yang by the latter. We were informed some time before it reached us that Hunan was flooded. The rains in this province (Hupeh) have also been very heavy. For about three weeks the heavens kept sending down torrents almost incessantly, and this did much towards enlarging the swollen stream which the Tung-ting lake was sending forth. The Sze-Chuen waters do not seem to have contributed anything to the extra volume which now floods the land. We can always distinguish between the Sze-Chuen and the Hunan waters, the latter being much clearer, owing to the deposit which takes place on their course through the Tung-ting lake. In the Han there is hardly any current, and the ascent near its mouth is almost as



easy as the descent. At the junction of the two streams there is quite a rush from the Yang-tse into the Han. Thus there can be no doubt as to the source of this extra rise. It is to be traced to the extraordinary heavy rains which have recently fallen in those hydrographical regions that are drained by the streams which discharge themselves into the Tung-ting and Po-yang lakes. With this fact before us, we find no difficulty in believing what the natives say about still greater floods which have been witnessed from time to time in these parts. They tell us that the water rose nineteen years ago nine or ten feet higher than it is to-day. To be convinced that such an event might take place, we have only to imagine a rise in the Sze-Chuen and Han waters similar to that which has taken place this year in those of Hunan, and all three pouring down their swollen volumes simultaneously into the valley below. Let us have this, and the wonderful phenomenon of 1850 will be repeated. Let us hope that it will not be our fate to witness such a sight this year. There is time enough for it, and all depends on the state of things at the sources of the Yang-tse and the Han. If it be dry there, the water will begin to fall forthwith, and we shall soon be walking on *terra firma* again. If not, evil times may befall us, and we shall be compelled to flee for safety to the surrounding hills.

'*August 7.*—The water is falling rapidly, and we are hoping to see dry land soon. During the last fortnight the daily preaching at Hankow and Han-yang has been carried on with vigour. The con-

gregations have been excellent, and a great deal of work has been done by both the missionaries and the native agents. We have not been able to resume our labours at Wuchang and the hospital on this side.'

When the waters had subsided he wrote to Mr. Jacob on October 21 :—

'You cannot imagine the state of things here just now. It is wonderful, however, how the people bear it all. An event of this kind in England would elicit a great wail of distress; here it creates but a slight sensation. . . . I fear, however, that worse times are coming, and that next year will be a severe one to hundreds of thousands of this poor people. The early crops of the year were destroyed by the first rise; and the seed-time has already passed away for this year. There are now more than a hundred thousand distressed people living in mat houses on the hills in our vicinity. These are provided for by the wealthier natives of Hankow. One of the Mandarins has given an excellent example of humanity. As a class the officials in China are a rapacious lot, but this man is a bright exception. It is very interesting to observe a heathen of this stamp. He is a devout man; and I believe that his living faith in a Being higher and better than himself—though that being is not the true God—has done much towards raising him above most of his fellow-men in this land. What puzzles me is that a man of this kind does not embrace Christianity at once. He loves goodness. How is it that he does not love Christ, the perfect embodiment of goodness? This is a perplexity to me. There are moral heathen.

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at least for this, namely, that they seek justi-
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off the Christian from all others. Justification
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s grounded in self-righteousness.'

CHAPTER X

IN DEFENCE OF MISSIONS

THE term of service for Europeans in China is now generally fixed at seven or eight years, at the end of which time a long furlough is regarded as indispensable. This is recognised not only by Missionary Societies, but by the Imperial Customs service and by the commercial community. In fact the Missionary Societies have been slower to recognise the need than the general community. The constant strain on physical strength and on nerve power resulting from climatic conditions is very great, even for those engaged in purely secular work. The Christian worker has, in addition, the demands on his nature which belong to the constant outflow of spiritual energy, and the tax levied on all the finer qualities of the heart and life by constant contact with heathenism, often waiting long for results from his earnest efforts to make known Christ, and much patience and care in watching over and leading ignorant and weak-kneed converts. A missionary needs mental and spiritual uplifting and revival as well as physical change; often the restoration of spiritual tone is the more urgent need of the two.

It is a good evidence of the physical strength of



Mr. John that he was able to remain in China for fifteen years without a change, but it is not surprising that for several years before he returned to Britain he looked wistfully forward to the time when he might be able to lay aside for a while the responsibilities of his work. The references in his private correspondence to the need for rest and change are very frequent from 1866 onward. Many men would have felt justified in leaving as soon as a colleague arrived, or would have pleaded that some *locum tenens* should be found for them from the staff at the older mission station in Shanghai. Such, however, has never been Mr. John's idea of duty. Having been commissioned of God to work for Him in China, the claims of His work have ever been foremost in his thought. This strong, self-repressing, soldierly spirit has found even more touching and striking expression in later years, but it was there ruling his younger manhood as it has ruled his riper years. Thus it happened that he remained in China year after year until 1870, though in 1869 he wrote to Mr. Jacob:—

'I often feel I am hardly discharging the duties of a parent to my children. But there is the work. Which is the more important? What has the first claim? It is not easy to leave a work like this.'

Some months earlier, in September 1868, he replied as follows to a resolution from the Directors of the Society, urging him to come home:—

'Many, many thanks to the Board for the cordial manner in which the resolution respecting my paying a visit to England was passed. From this you will

see that the special boat excursion has been made. I shall certainly not leave the Mission as long as it indispensably needs my presence, whatever sacrifice the delay may entail. My heart is too full of the Hankow Mission and God's work generally in this region to admit of my doing that. I feel in a way that I have never felt before that the valleys of the Yang-tse and the Han have been taken possession of in the name of Christ, and that it is for me to live and die for the millions of precious souls that line these two truly magnificent streams. Still I must return for various reasons ere long. If I remain for a year or two longer I shall in all probability make one or two more excursions into some distant parts of the country.'

At the time that Mr. John was expressing his deep satisfaction that the valleys of the Yang-tse and the Han had been taken possession of in the name of Christ, a disturbance took place at the town of Yang-Chow, a place of some importance on the banks of the Yang-tse, nearly midway between Hankow and Shanghai. It was caused by the attempt of a somewhat large party of missionaries belonging to the China Inland Mission to settle in the town. They were attacked by the mob, plundered of all they possessed, and escaped with their lives only by the intervention of the native authorities.

The case was not a very exceptional one, and it was evidently due to local causes. The British authorities, however, were not content with the action of the Vice-Consul, who had sent a gunboat to succour



the fugitives. There had been a number of cases of violation of the treaty and ill-treatment of foreigners, so that it was thought advisable to make a demonstration in force by sending seven men-of-war up the river.

The outcome of the affair when it was reported in England was a violent attack on missions and missionaries. There was nothing new or original in this attack. The same kind of statements have been repeated time after time since then, and were uttered with much emphasis during the late Boxer rising. It would scarcely be worth while to stir the cold embers of this forgotten excitement were it not for the way in which it touched the work of Mr. John, and the strong vindication of the missionary position it called forth from him.

The Times of March 10, 1869, contained a leading article, with the following edifying paragraph :—

'A discussion, the like of which we have often heard before, and shall often hear again, occurred yesterday in the House of Lords on the subject of missionaries. Missionaries are people who are always provoking the men of the world. We occasionally meet them at home and find them very commonplace persons, not very well educated, not quite gentlemen, very much given to tell long stories, the gist of which is that some native of somewhere said, "Oh, sir, how happy I feel. How much I am indebted to you and Mrs. Brown." Graphic anecdotes of ex-cannibals who know by heart more texts than the most experienced Sunday School teacher form an interesting part of

their annual reports, and while these duly extract the guineas of their habitual patrons, they are apt to be received with unbelief and contempt by those who give the tone to political discussions. Parliament is not fond of missionaries, nor is the press, nor is general society. Some recent occurrences in China have tended to revive the prejudice against them.'

This had reference to a debate on the previous day in the House of Lords, in which the Duke of Somerset made a violent attack on missionaries in China, revealing alike his ignorance of geography, his ignorance of the progress of missionary work in China, and his ignorance of the character and spirit of the Protestant missionaries. In concluding a long speech, the Duke is reported to have said:—

'A missionary, indeed, must be an enthusiast; if he is not an enthusiast, he is probably a rogue. No man would go and live up one of those rivers and preach Christianity unless he were an enthusiast, and being an enthusiast he is the more dangerous. Now, I am anxious to know what chance we have of reducing these missions, or, at least, of not allowing them to go still further up the country. They have already got as far as Yang-Chow, and I am afraid they will go further up the country unless they are stopped, and the further they go the more it will be prejudicial to the interests of Christianity. It may, perhaps, be said that they go at their own peril; but this is not the fact, for if a riot occurs and a missionary is injured or killed, a naval force is called on to interfere, unless Peking is so close at hand as to allow time for an



appeal to the Chinese Government. Nobody is so much responsible for this mischief as the London Missionary Society, and that Society had much better send its missions to some other part of the world, and leave China unconverted, than pursue their present course. He wished to know whether the Government would not adopt some more efficient and stringent mode of dealing with these missionaries, either by sending them out of the country, or by telling them that they should go no further and imperil our friendly relations with China by their proceedings.'

The Earl of Clarendon, replying on behalf of the Government, continued the attack, and said among other things:—

'The fact is quite plain that, not only the authorities and influential persons, but the whole population of China, are adverse to the spread of missionary establishments. It is not only most dangerous for the missionaries themselves, but it is much to be condemned with respect to the Government and people of the country. The course of things is exactly what my noble friend has described. An outrage occurs, life is jeopardised, blood is shed, property is sacrificed, an appeal is made to the nearest consul, who straightway calls to his aid the nearest naval commander, and gunboats go up to exact reparation. The consequence is that we never know what tidings the next mail may bring us, and we are always on the brink of war, not on account of the violation of any British rights, of any insult to the English Government or flag, or of any injury done to commerce, but on account of the

protection of good but imprudent men, who cannot or will not perceive the natural consequences of their own acts.'

Fortunately the noble lords were not allowed to enjoy very long the satisfaction of attack without effective reply; for the Bishop of Peterborough (Dr. Magee) was in the House, and vindicated the cause of the missionaries in a speech which supported his already great reputation, and effectually demolished the arguments of their opponents. He said:—

'The noble Duke (the Duke of Somerset) had given a piece of advice to missionaries which he thought no missionary would accept—namely, to leave some particular parts of the world unconverted, or flee from attempts to convert them, because, forsooth, these attempts might prejudice the interests of British trade. The youngest and least zealous of missionaries would probably reply that, important as were the interests of British trade, there was something in his eyes more sacred even than that sacred opium trade for which Great Britain once thought it worth while to wage war —namely, obedience to the command of his Master to go forth and seek to convey the Gospel to every living soul, at whatever risk to himself or others.

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'English subjects, as he understood, possessed rights under treaty, and, provided they did not transgress the limits imposed by the treaty, they were equally entitled to protection, whether they sold cotton or Bibles. It was surely unworthy of a Christian nation to say that if its subjects engaged in any trade, however demoral



ising, they should be protected from the least infraction of their rights, or from the least insult, by all the might of Great Britain; but that if they became missionaries and happened to displease the susceptibilities of the Chinese, they should be left to their fate, or saved from the mob by a forcible expatriation.

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'The noble Earl, the Foreign Secretary, had advised the missionaries to "follow in the wake of trade." Perhaps the noble Earl would mention the kind of trade in whose wake they were to follow? There happened to be trades carried on by British subjects, and protected with a high hand by the Government, which would make a most unhappy preliminary to the preaching of the missionary. Were they to "follow in the wake" of the opium trade, or to wait until the beneficent influence of fire-water had prepared the minds of the barbarians whom they were teaching, or were they to wait until the British traders had inoculated them with all their vices, before they commenced teaching them the Gospel? Instead of waiting for this, the missionary felt that he had a duty imposed on him by a higher Master to go forth and preach the Gospel.'

So great, however, was the storm raised by the press that the Directors of the London Missionary Society deemed it advisable to send out instructions that their missionaries should confine themselves to the treaty ports, and should not attempt to settle in other places. In accordance with this decision they instructed Mr. John to withdraw from Wuchang.

Fortunately their missionary was one whose dictionary did not contain the word 'retreat.' He protested vigorously and successfully against any withdrawal from Wuchang as practically closing the door against any advance whatever. When all other arguments failed he pointed out that the buildings of the mission in Wuchang had been erected with money contributed by the European community in Hankow, and that they ought to be consulted. Finally the Directors cancelled their instructions and he gained the day.

In the course of his correspondence on the subject he mentioned an aspect of the matter which is not always remembered. 'Matters are in a very different state now from what they were formerly. Of late a great deal has been written and spoken about the missions and their work. Our Viceroy is a very intelligent man, and anti-foreign to the backbone. He knows just as well as I do all that has been said in the House of Lords, and all that has appeared in *The Times* on missionaries and the missionary enterprise. He sees that we are despised and distrusted, and he knows that we are at his mercy. It is certain, too, that the Chinese Government will grant us no privileges willingly. The policy of the Government is, was, and ever will be to oppose the hated foreigner, whether missionary or merchant, in his every attempt to obtain a foothold in the interior.'

The nature of the correspondence between H.M. Government and the British Minister in Peking having been made known, and containing some remarkable statements by the Minister, Sir Rutherford Alcock,



about missionaries, strong protest was made by the united body of missionaries in Peking. Mr. John also sent to the Directors of the London Missionary Society two long and important letters expressing his views. The greater part of the contents of these letters necessarily referred to the subject from the point of the immediate controversy, and it is not necessary to reproduce them now. There are, however, some portions of the letters which may assist some even now to understand the reasons why difficulties occur, and are likely to occur, in the intercourse between the Chinese and Western nations. Great and remarkable changes have taken place of late, yet the bulk of the Chinese people, literati and commoners, still answer to Mr. John's description of them. The urgency of the appeal that comes from China that the Church of Christ should be wise, generous, and prompt in responding to the present demand for Western education lies in the fact that the forces of ignorant conservatism, pride, and reaction are so vast, and that prejudice is so deep-rooted.

'We are now drawing to the close of the year 1869. With regard to China, this has been a year fraught with deep interest. As missionaries we have every reason to be thankful that so much public attention has been drawn to our existence and work. The English press, the Foreign Minister at Peking, and the Duke of Somerset have all done us good service. The irrational cry against missions and missionaries, elicited by the Yang-Chow riot, shows that an incredible amount of ignorance existed in respect to the

missionary enterprise in China. The work and the agents have been misrepresented, calumniated, and ridiculed in no measured terms by many of your leading newspapers, and by some of the peers of the realm. Here in China, too, they have been handled rather roughly by a section of the press. Men who have never put a foot within the door of a missionary's house, chapel, or schoolroom think that they have a right to speak authoritatively of him and his labours. In attacking missionaries there is nothing to be feared here. To asperse them is a perfectly safe employment; for it is generally supposed that they have no reputation to be tarnished.

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'Whilst the missionaries can afford to treat all unjust accusations maliciously or thoughtlessly preferred against them by their enemies with the silent contempt which they deserve, it is a duty, which they owe to themselves as well as the cause, to do what they can to remove any erroneous views honestly, though ignorantly, held by those who take a deep interest in their labours, and who would greatly rejoice in their success.

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'There is a great deal of talk about Chinese civilisation. It is greatly overrated and underrated. In many respects it is a wonderful civilisation. It is very interesting to study its rise and progress till arrested many centuries ago (by some mysterious cause), to be succeeded by a long and dreary period of lifeless conservatism. For many ages the Chinese have scarcely advanced a step in the path of true progress.

The Chinaman of to-day is, in all the important features of his life and character, the facsimile of the Chinaman of the remote past. He sees things in the same light in which his ancient brother saw them, and talks and reasons about them in the same old-fashioned way. The sweep of his vision is bounded by the same horizon. The great universe presents the same aspect to him as it did to his prototype, neither larger nor smaller, neither more nor less sublime. Heaven and earth speak to him in no new voices; and exhaustless nature discloses to him no new laws, forces, or elements. The civil wars of the Chinese have been protracted and carried on on gigantic scales; yet hardly one of them resulted in anything higher or better than a temporary change of masters. Though we read of one or two political and social changes of some importance effected by these dynastic revolutions, we fail to discover any traces of an impression produced on the national mind by any or all of them. That has always remained stereotyped, and more than proof against all disturbing forces. In character, principles, aspirations, and aim, the nation has successfully emerged out of each cataclysm unchanged. The enfranchisement of the people, progress, and reform, in the sense in which these terms are understood in the West, are never aimed at by an insurrectionist or a great minister in China. The idea of establishing a new order of things, which shall be an improvement on the old, never enters the mind of any one. There are one or two memorable exceptions on record; but this is emphatically the rule. Such a change the people

neither expect nor desire. All they look for is the removal of certain grievances arising from maladministration, the rectification of corrupted manners, the reformation of abuses, and the complete restoration of primeval order. Beyond this point their hopes and aspirations never go; and a political or an insurgent chief who should attempt anything more would be an object of almost universal execration. Hence the reason why Chinese history is, on the whole, the driest and most uninteresting of studies. It is not a record of either progress or regress, but of stagnation. And hence it is, also, that the Chinese are the most inscrutable and unattractive specimens of humanity we come in contact with. They belong to the past, of which we know but little, and with which we cannot sympathise much. The impress of the ages is stamped on the Chinaman's brow. He is more nearly related to the men beyond the flood than to the men of the present. If one of the Abrahamic age were to rise from his grave, he would recognise in the modern Chinaman a contemporary and a brother. They would have no difficulty in understanding each other, whilst both would be equally puzzled as to what to make of us. . . .

'But are we not much superior to them? Are we not more manly, more intelligent, more skilful, more humane, more civilised, nay, are we not more estimable every way? Yes, according to our way of thinking. *No*, emphatically *no*, according to theirs. And it would be nearly as difficult for us to alter our opinion on the subject as it is for them to alter theirs. . . .

'There is more than fear and policy in the opposition

which China makes to free intercourse with Western nations. That these exist, and that they operate most powerfully, is patent to all. The handful of Tartars who now hold the country, and the body of officials who govern it for the purpose of enriching themselves at the expense of the people, do unquestionably dread the admission of foreign enterprise and skill, and the spread of religion and knowledge, on purely selfish grounds. They know that free intercourse tends to enlighten the people, stimulate independent thought, and destroy the despotic rule of the Mandarins. They know that new light must bring with it a revolution sooner or later, and that in the struggle they would have nothing to gain, but everything to lose. To them the introduction of foreign elements is a matter of life and death, and to be resisted to the utmost. But the man who sees nothing more than this in the nature of the resistance which China opposes to foreign enterprise and skill does not see to the bottom of the question. Behind the official class there is the powerful literary class. The literati are the conservatives of China, and the formers and guides of public opinion, in so far as such a thing may be said to exist in this country. These men's eyes are intently fixed on the past. In their heart of hearts they believe that it cannot be excelled; and the supreme aim and end of their existence is to perpetuate it. According to their way of thinking China has always been, is now, and is ever to be the source and centre of true civilisation. . . .

'Such are the literati. It is impossible not to displease them. To preach is to insult them, for in

the very act you assume the position of a teacher. To publish a book on religion or science is to insult them for in doing that you take for granted that China is not the depository of all truth and knowledge. To establish hospitals and other benevolent institutions is to insult them, for there is in the idea a reflection on their native skill and charity. To propound progress is to insult them, for therein you intimate that China has not reached the very acme of civilisation, and that you stand on a higher platform than they. This is the way the literati think and feel with respect to foreigners and everything that is foreign; and the anti-foreign, anti-progressive, exclusive, self-satisfied, proud, and supercilious spirit of this class is *the* resisting medium in China. . . .

'Behind the literati are the people. These are, on the whole, quiet, industrious, and harmless. With respect to foreigners, the people seem to me to be passive, except when roused to antagonism and hatred by their superiors. It would be too much to say that they like us or desire intercourse with us; but it would be equally wide of the mark to say that they are ill-disposed towards us. Of course I am not now speaking of those who have come into close contact with us, and who have been benefited by us religiously or otherwise. Among these there are many thousands who are warmly attached to us, who desire sincerely that China should come into warmer and more intimate relations with the nations of the West, who readily acknowledge our superiority in many respects, and who pity the blindness of those who set their faces so



resolutely against all progress. I am speaking of the people at large; and of them it may be said without fear of contradiction that they neither love nor hate us; that they would rejoice in any relations with us that would secure to them any obvious benefits; that they are susceptible of good impressions; and that we have no quarrel with them. If we had to deal with them only, our intercourse with China would be eminently peaceful and satisfactory. But they are in the hands and under the control of the official and literary classes; they are ever obedient to impulses which descend upon them from above; and they are most cruel and revengeful whenever their suspicions are aroused and their passions excited. They have been taught to think that their superiors alone have a right to think on public matters; they say that as the Mandarins are paid for attending to politics it is no business of theirs; and they feel that it is for them simply to obey orders whenever issued. The Government can do with them what it likes. Let them be told in a language that cannot be misunderstood that they are expected to treat all foreigners kindly and respectfully, and they will do so, and residence in the interior will be as safe as at the open ports. . . .

'I now proceed to notice the grounds on which a restrictive policy with respect to missionary operations in the interior is recommended.

'We are informed by Lord Clarendon that there are "grave differences between the Protestant and the Roman Catholic missionaries, of which Sir R. Alcock gives very unseemly instances." That there is a vital

difference between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism we all know and admit. For this, however, the missionary is not responsible. This he cannot and must not conceal. In preaching and teaching both parties are bound to declare what they believe to be God's truth.

'But whatever hostile feelings the two classes of missionaries may cherish towards each other, they both seem to make it a point to keep them from public view as much as possible (of the Protestant missionaries this may be said emphatically); so that wranglings and bickerings between them are things almost unknown.

'Of a piece with this is another charge. The Protestant missionaries quarrel not only with the Roman Catholic priests, but also with each other; and this is another reason why they should confine themselves to the treaty ports, and even there exercise great caution. It seems that many years ago they had a dispute with each other about the proper terms to be employed to translate *Elohim* and *Theos* into Chinese. This philological discussion, like most discussions of the kind, was carried on with a degree of acrimony on both sides, and was the cause of a temporary estrangement between certain able, earnest, and devoted brethren. It did doubtless interfere to some extent with the peace and harmony of the missionary circle, and so far must have told prejudicially on the highest interests of the work. The discussion was necessary and inevitable; it is only to be regretted that it could not have been carried on without an



admixture of human infirmities. It was, however, confined to the missionaries themselves. Neither the Government nor the people of China knew anything about it. Even the converts were not affected by it. And it was over more than fifteen years ago. Ever since, each missionary has been using the terms which commended themselves to his judgment. On this point complete toleration exists, and has existed for a long period. It is difficult to see what the British Government has to do with an affair like this, or why it should have been brought forward after the lapse of years, or why it should be urged at all against the extension of missionary operations.

'There is another charge which calls for an explanation. Sir. R. Alcock "has alluded in strong terms of condemnation to the sympathy which many of the Protestant missionaries manifested towards the T'ai-p'ing rebels." It must be allowed that not a few of the Protestant missionaries did manifest considerable sympathy with the T'ai-p'ings. But it ought not to be forgotten that, if they did err in this matter, they erred in good company. Among the well-wishers of that great movement were to be found merchants, British naval officers, consuls, and even the Governor of Hong-Kong. . . . But whatever opinions the missionaries held, and whatever sympathies they felt, it is a well-known fact that they (with perhaps *one* exception) *did* nothing of which the Chinese Government could reasonably complain. They did not give the rebels a particle of assistance or a word of encouragement in their rebellion. If the missionaries went among them,

it was simply with the view of procuring information, of teaching them more fully the way of truth, or exhorting them to banish their erroneous opinions and unchristian practices, and of rebuking them for imitating their enemies in deeds of cruelty and violence. They made it a point to eschew politics in their intercourse with them.

'There is another objection to the missionaries extending the sphere of their operations in China, namely, that they do not go about their work in the right way. Lord Clarendon informs us that Sir R. Alcock has stated "that if ever Christianity were to become general in China it would be through the upper classes, and not in spite of them." In this remark it is clearly implied that there is something faulty in our plan, which must be removed ere the work can succeed. Every genuine missionary must desire above all things the conversion of the whole of this great nation, and would feel sincerely thankful to any one for any valuable suggestion as to the best and speediest way of achieving a result so desirable and glorious. But the above remark, like many more of the same kind, volunteered by men who will write without bestowing any serious thought on the subject, betrays great ignorance of what has been done, of what we are attempting to do, and of the difficulties which beset our path.

'As a matter of fact we do not ignore the upper classes, and it is not our desire to convert the Chinese in spite of them. The doors of our chapels are thrown open daily to all classes, and if any class keeps aloof



it is not the missionary's fault. Among our hearers, scholars and respectable people are often to be seen. We are always glad to welcome them, and sometimes we have most interesting discussions with them. Not a few of the missionaries study the ancient classics thoroughly, and read extensively in the general literature of the country, in order to be able to meet the learned on their own ground, enter with them into the labyrinths of their philosophical speculations, and gradually prepare their minds to listen to the message of salvation. Our literature, too, has been prepared with the view of meeting the wants of all classes. Many of our books are written in the simplest style. These are intended for the common people, to whom the highest style would be as unintelligible as Latin or Greek. Not a few have been prepared expressly for the educated class. Some of these are admirably adapted, both in matter and style, to command the attention and respect of the learned; and they would do so were it not for the general indifference of this class to all religious truth, and their special contempt for every foreign religion.

'I fear, nevertheless, that for a long period to come we shall be compelled to prosecute our labours in spite of the wise, the noble, and the mighty of the land. Pride, prejudice, worldly interests, education, prospects, and position, all combine to steel their hearts against the truth. "I have heard," said Mencius, "of men using the doctrines of our great land to change barbarians, but I have never yet heard of any being changed by barbarians. I have heard of birds leaving

dark valleys to remove to lofty trees, but I have never heard of their descending from lofty trees to enter into dark valleys." To the upper classes the foreign teacher is (to use the language of Mencius) "a shrike-tongued barbarian whose doctrines are not those of the ancient kings, and whom the great Chow-king would have smitten and driven out of the country." Interest, as well as pride, prevents their giving a fair hearing to the Gospel. Their position in society is against it. To embrace the faith would blight their brightest prospects, and involve the loss of all that they have ever deemed precious. A man cannot be a mandarin and a Christian at the same time. But what is worse than all, the religious instinct is almost, if not quite, dead in the upper classes. Religion exerts no influence on their life. To them there is no personal God, no immortality. They do not pray except as a matter of form, and in obedience to the rites; for they maintain that all things recur according to the unchangeable laws of an endless progression. We find the people, on the other hand, more humble, docile, and religious. In them there seems to be something left to which the Gospel can appeal, whilst the neutralising elements are fewer and less operative. This will account for the fact that the bulk of our converts belong to the working classes. Nearly every missionary station can boast of some scholars; but, with few exceptions, they are not our most earnest, warm-hearted, or even intelligent Christians. In China the fact is constantly verified that these things are hid from the wise and prudent, but revealed unto babes.

'That the Gospel should have taken this course in China ought not to be a cause of wonderment to any one who reads his New Testament, or who has but a smattering of knowledge of Church history. Our Saviour's life was spent among the poor. At the hand of the upper classes he received little else than ridicule, opposition, persecution, and death. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." Such was the experience of the great Apostle. "Let no educated, no wise man approach; but whoever is ignorant, uneducated—whoever is like a child, let him come and be comforted." These words, put into the mouths of the Christians by Celsus, sufficiently indicate the social and literary standing of most of Christ's followers in his day. My impression is that Christianity in China will have to lodge itself in the hearts and consciences of the people generally, and manifest itself in their lives in power and beauty, before the upper classes will take Confucius down from his lofty throne and bow the knee to the Nazarene. Here, as elsewhere, the weak things of the world seem destined to confound the things that are mighty, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are. Our Saviour commenced at the bottom of the scale, and we have to do the same. Sir R. Alcock would have us reverse the order, and commence at the top. But he does not tell us how this is to be done. Would he kindly inform us how the upper ten thousand in China are to be reached? We desire their conversion most earnestly, but cannot get at them. We do what we can to move them, but

find that we might as well try and move the "Five Mountains." It is easy to criticise our work; but we want our friends to take a practical interest in our enterprise, and to show us how the plans recommended by them are to be embodied in action. We find ourselves surrounded by certain conditions that shape our schemes and direct our course. Will any one point out to us a way by which we may surmount or break through these conditions, and place ourselves in the midst of others more favourable to the evangelisation of the whole country?

'The panacea recommended by many is the appointment by the various Missionary Societies of a superior class of men for China. There is a general impression abroad that the missionaries as a class are uneducated and incapable men. They may be equal to the task of raising the savages of Africa, Madagascar, and the South Seas; but "it is vain" (to use the language of Sir R. Alcock) "to hope for the conversion of a shrewd, rationalistic, and sceptical nation like the Chinese by instrumentality so imperfect." Merchants and others seem often greatly surprised to find that a missionary knows anything at all. "Why," said a merchant the other day, speaking about a man of whom he absolutely knew nothing, "that man would have been a shoemaker at home, but he comes out here as a missionary, and commands a good salary and a respectable position in society." I happen to know both the missionary and the merchant, and I can safely say that of the two the missionary is by far the better man. He is not only better educated than

the merchant, but well educated, and is in every way admirably qualified for the duties of his sacred office. It is a strange notion but a very common one. It is handed about from the one to the other and believed blindly by all. I know not why Sir R. Alcock should have spoken of the "human instrumentalities brought to bear upon the Chinese people for their conversion as seemingly ill-adapted to secure the end proposed." Though all the missionaries in China would feel thankful if they were better fitted for the gigantic task which lies before them, and would rejoice to see men more highly endowed with all moral, spiritual, and intellectual gifts than themselves coming out to take up the work, yet they have no need to be ashamed of themselves, and the Churches need not blush on their account. Compared with the other classes of foreigners in China, they are not inferior either in capacity or attainments. Neither the diplomatic service, nor the consular service, nor the mercantile enterprise can boast of men of greater ability, of higher culture, and in every way better adapted to secure the end proposed. Of the majority of the missionaries Sir R. Alcock can know but little. His knowledge of a few, however, must be pretty intimate, and what seems unaccountable is that he should have formed such an opinion of the whole from the specimens that have come under his immediate notice. Such men as Medhurst, Lockhart, Edkins, Martin, and Burns are the missionaries whom he has known best. Surely he is not prepared to say that such human instrumentalities are seemingly ill-adapted? Moreover, he

cannot be altogether unacquainted with the literary productions of the missionaries. He must know that the Chinese are indebted to the missionaries *alone* for *all* the scientific as well as the religious works that have been translated into their language. He knows, too, that the world is indebted to the Protestant missionaries for "all the Chinese dictionaries yet made for English students of Chinese," for the best and most learned translation of a large portion of the Chinese classics, for the *Chinese Repository*, for the *Middle Kingdom*, and for many other valuable works on the language, the religions, and the manners and customs of China.

'But it must be confessed that some of the best missionaries are men of whom the noisy world hears least. They are not authors, not because they are wanting in taste or ability for the production of literary works, but because they deem it to be their duty to crucify the natural predilections, in order to devote the whole of their time and energies to what seems to them to be a more urgent and toilsome work. All honour to the translator and the author. They are doing a good and valuable work. Our enterprise needs them both. Still I maintain that theirs is the easiest and by far the most congenial sphere. It is a much more pleasant thing to spend one's days in the study with an intelligent native than to mingle with the people at large. The man who is to be found in season and out of season superintending his churches, schools, and Bible classes, preaching and teaching in the chapels, the streets, the tea-gardens, and other

places of public resort, travelling among the surrounding towns and villages, everywhere dispensing the bread of life to perishing men, and striving to impress immortal spirits with the image of Jesus: this is the true Apostolic succession, the missionary *par excellence*, the kind of man that China most needs at the present time. Such men cannot be manufactured. Such a work cannot be carried on mechanically. The men for such a work must have the *thing* in them. They are the missionaries "that are sown by nature; men endowed with highest gifts, the vision and the faculty divine." They are the real powers, though they may go to the grave unthought of by the wise and the learned. Xavier wrote no books, but since the days of the Apostles the world has not seen a greater missionary. Call him a fanatic, a Papist, and a Jesuit if you like; but look at his love to God, his philanthropy, his glowing faith, his enthusiasm, his Apostolic energy, his daring, his unutterable longings, his restless activity. "But this I dare to say," said he, "that whatever form of torture or of death awaits me, I am ready to suffer it ten thousand times for the salvation of a *single* soul." The man did not so much believe; he *saw*. What wonder if his being thus became sublime and comprehensive! Rome has not assigned a seat among the demi-gods to a hero of nobler mould or of more exalted magnanimity than Francis Xavier. Ricci, Schaal, and Verbiest were men of great erudition, and did much towards paving the way for the introduction of Roman Catholicism into every province of China. But it is not from these

that their successors draw their inspiration. It is the spirit of Xavier that burns within them, it is his mighty influence that rests upon them, it is his wonderful life that animates them. It was not Ricci, Schaal, and Verbiest who established the Roman Catholic Church in China. The rich and the noble who were induced to join the Church by the Court influence of these and other great men vanished before the first breath of persecution. But the tens of thousands gathered in by earnest and zealous men of Xavier's stamp (whose names, however, are not known) remained firm to the end. The Christians that we meet now in every district of every province are the descendants of those early converts. The one class of missionaries have left behind them books of more or less value; the other class have left behind churches of living men and women. As missionaries, which of the two classes stands highest?

'Now I maintain that those who criticise our work ought to bear in mind our supreme aim. Let the subject be thoroughly discussed; let the defects of the present mode of operation be pointed out clearly; let suggestions be given freely; but let everything be done in true sympathy, and with a genuine desire to promote the real interests of the missionary enterprise. What we aim at is the *Christianisation* of this great people. Our object is not to make the people more skilful, more rich, more powerful, but simply to make them holy and happy evermore. We believe that Christianity alone can do this, and we therefore devote ourselves to the one thing of propagating it. We

believe that in doing this we are seeking to promote the highest interests of the nation, and preparing the minds of the people for universal progress.'

The state of affairs in China at this time was very unsatisfactory politically, in commerce, and in missionary work. There was a feverish sense of trouble everywhere, which seemed to bode ill for peace. In June 1870 there was an outbreak of popular feeling in Tientsin, directed against the Sisters of the Roman Catholic Mission there, which resulted in a terrible massacre. Nine Sisters of Mercy and about fifty Roman Catholic converts were killed; the Roman Cathedral, the Sisters' house, and some Protestant chapels were destroyed. France promptly demanded reparation, and the Chinese Government sent a Special Envoy to France to apologise. Having done this, they sent a circular to the Powers attacking all missionaries, and making very serious demands regarding the restriction of their work. The Chinese claim was of so reactionary a character that, as Mr. John remarked, when the news reached him, 'if complied with, it will shut every church, chapel, and school in China, and restore the days of Morrison, so far as the missionaries are concerned.'

Fortunately the British Foreign Office was presided over by one who was able to discuss the position of the missionaries with intelligent sympathy. Earl Granville's temperate yet firm reply to the Chinese circular reaffirmed some broad principles very clearly, and there has been no attempt to repudiate them since then.

CHAPTER XI

THE FIRST FURLOUGH

AT length the time arrived when, after more than one delay, the wearied missionary felt himself free to start for home. Mrs. John had for some time been in very poor health, and greatly needed the change, and the mission in Hankow and Wuchang was in the capable hands of Messrs. Bryant and Bryson and their trusted native helpers. Passages were taken on the 'Imperatrice,' which sailed on July 26, 1870. Before they left there was a gathering of the native Church to bid farewell to their spiritual father. Mr. Bryson sent a report of the meeting to the Directors:—

'On the 23rd of July, when the flood was rising rapidly in the streets of Hankow, and the only means of getting to the hospital chapel was by employing a boat, or wading through the dirty, stagnant water, a large congregation assembled from all parts of Hankow, Wuchang, and Han-yang. The number of women, too, who had managed to be there that day, notwithstanding the difficulty and danger of locomotion, was astonishing. They had come, both male and female, old and young, to take leave of those who had been a father and mother to them for nine years, who

had guided many of them into the fold of Christ, had defended them against adversaries, and cared for them in all their sicknesses and adversities. The service was a simple one, consisting principally of prayers and addresses by the native Christians, in which they called to mind all that God had done for them through their pastor, commended him and his family to the grace and protection of God on the journey home, spoke of the joyous hope of meeting in the better land, and exhorted each other to fidelity and work, seeing that the days were short and the end would soon come. It was a most solemn and affecting meeting.'

The travellers reached England on September 30, after a pleasant voyage, and settled for a time in Mrs. John's old home at Machynlleth, where her mother still resided in her widowhood. They afterwards removed to Swansea for greater convenience. As they passed through London they naturally made their way at once to Blackheath, where their two boys were in the School for the Sons of Missionaries. It is not surprising to learn that the boys did not recognise their father, the elder had not seen him for nearly ten years. The fact, however, suggests one of the great trials of missionary life, the necessity for the separation of parents and children during the years which are most critical for the formation of character. The facilities for frequent correspondence have greatly increased, and the kindness of many friends is very great, but nothing can quite compensate for the loss of the personal intercourse and the influence of the personal oversight and guidance of the father and mother.

Mr. John left China with the intention, if possible, to devote a considerable portion of the leisure of his furlough to study, and especially to spend some months in Germany in the study of philosophy. On arrival in Britain, he very soon found himself drawn into the vortex of 'deputation' work, and these plans for study vanished away. The earnest friends of missions are always eager to see the missionaries whom they have been supporting by their gifts and prayers, and the large class of the lukewarm, and of those who though professing Christians have no real interest in the spread of the Kingdom of Christ among the heathen, need to be enlightened and aroused from their apathy by the missionary story and appeal. The closer contact with the thought and life of the great heathen world which has been the result of missionary effort has been the means of greatly broadening and enriching our conceptions of God, humanity, and destiny. The constant witness by earnest men who have been face to face with heathenism as to the universal sinfulness and demoralisation of human nature; the evidence of the insufficiency of the religious systems of the world to bring deliverance to the captive, and recovery of sight to the blind; and the testimony to the wonderful adaptation of the Gospel to the universal need, and its unfailing power to lift up and renew humanity, have had an incalculable yet largely unnoticed influence in reshaping Christian doctrine as well as in maintaining the fervour of Christian love and consecration. The missionary is usually thought of in connection with his direct work on the field, yet his message to the home







Griffith John



Churches is often as valuable as his message to the heathen.

Mr. John received a very warm welcome from his countrymen in Wales, and responded willingly to their invitations to speak. He worked hard and successfully to renew his fluency in his own Welsh tongue, to which he had been an entire stranger all the time he had been in China, and it was soon discovered that he could preach. Requests for his services then poured in upon him from all parts of Wales; and, as he became known, the demands for his help from the principal auxiliaries to the London Missionary Society in England and Scotland were numerous and pressing. Writing to one of the secretaries of the Society he says:—

'The invitations from different parts of the Principality are simply innumerable. If you say that I must go to those large places in England, I can only say that I must obey. What reply am I to give to my Welsh friends? The annual and quarterly associations are passing resolutions in reference to my services, and I am expected to comply with the requests of all. If I had Wales alone to think about, I could manage matters. But it is more than I can do to attend to England and Wales. Please give me some idea as to the best way of managing affairs.

'I have been to some important places in North Wales, and I trust that some good has been done. Next week there is to be an immense association at Llanelly, and another in Anglesea the week following. I am to preach at both. These services are certainly

trying; but they are glorious opportunities for doing good. One sermon on such an occasion is worth twenty on ordinary ones.'

These constant demands had an effect in two directions. Before long his strength gave way alarmingly, and for a little while he was quite incapacitated for work. On March 28, 1871, the first note of warning appeared in a note to the Rev. W. Fairbrother:—

'We have had some splendid meetings, the largest chapels actually crowded. But I am feeling that my health is giving way, and I am anxious to put my case fairly before you. I believe that I need absolute rest for some months, and that unless I get it I shall fairly break down. I am extremely nervous, my memory seems to be forsaking me quite, and I can't rest. This state of things began in China, and it has been growing worse and worse since I have been at home. It cost me a desperate effort to get the old language back, so that I have really had no rest. I feel sometimes as if my mind were about to forsake me. I am anxious to do what I can for the Society, and I see that good may be done; but I am not equal to the task just at present. We have had some fine meetings, but I can't tell you what each meeting costs me and how miserable it makes me. Such is the state of things. What do you advise me to do? Am I to go on, or am I to stop? I have a fortnight more here, and I intend to try and finish the task which lies before me; but I shall make no further promises till I receive a reply from you to this.'

A week later he wrote again to the Rev. R. Robinson :—

'MY DEAR MR. ROBINSON,—I am much obliged for your kind and affectionate letter. You may be sure that I am truly anxious to promote the interests of the Society to the utmost of my ability. I fully intended to be at the May Meetings, and try and do my part; but I am convinced now that I require perfect rest from mental anxiety and labour. I can't tell you how the slightest anxiety affects my mind. I wrote Dr. Lockhart last week, and his reply is this: "You must not take any work at present at all. You must have complete holiday for a long period. What I interdict is all *public services*." I consulted the first practitioner in Swansea on Monday last, and herewith enclose his communication. You have probably seen Dr. Lockhart, and heard from him his own opinion. If in view of these opinions you think I am justified in taking immediate and complete rest, I shall be very glad. I am convinced that it is entirely *mental*, and that it has been coming on for two years. Now and then I am blessed with a lucid hour, and I am myself; but then comes darkness and dread, and I am simply miserable. No one sees it in my face; but my friends feel it intensely. I broke down completely last Sunday, and have cancelled my engagements for this week.—Yours faithfully, (Signed) G. JOHN.

'Will you kindly inform Mr. Fairbrother of the purport of this note?'

Fortunately, though the signs of overstrain con-

tinued for some months, they yielded to rest and care, and they do not seem to have recurred.

The other result of his popularity was a strong conviction among his friends in Swansea and elsewhere that he ought not to return to China. Very strong pressure was brought to bear on him in various quarters to accept a pastorate at home. Allusions to this pressure occur in several of his letters to his colleague, the Rev. T. Bryson, and one or two of these reveal the earnestness, consecration, and fidelity to principle of Mr. and Mrs. John in a very beautiful way. Only a month after arriving he says :—'I confess it will cost me more to return to China than it did to go out for the first time, and I cannot but see that there is a noble sphere of usefulness inviting me here. Conscience, however, is wholly on the side of China.'

A little later he wrote again to his colleague a letter, some sentences of which read strangely in the light of later years, but which is valuable as a revelation of his estimate of the value of the work to which he had been called, and of the spirit in which he felt that work should be approached :—

'MACHYNLLETH, *November* 28, 1870.

'I am convinced that there is no work like the missionary work. It seems to me to be far more real and more noble than anything I see around me. So far as personal comforts are concerned, I could have more here than in China. It would be the easiest thing in the world for me to find among my

own people a most comfortable home and a very useful sphere of labour. But, to tell you candidly, I should feel that I was descending from a much higher platform. Even the position of a Spurgeon is inferior to ours. I am telling you what I really feel in my deepest heart, after seeing a little of home life and feeling somewhat its attractions. But in writing this I find that I am thinking of my ideal missionary—what I have longed to be, but never was. You will, in reading this, remember the many long chats we have had about our ideal missionary. I felt then that that was the sort of man China needed; and, at this distance, I feel so still. I never thought less than I do this moment of the book-makers, the dictionary-makers, the grammar-makers, etc. It is only in those unspiritual communities the book-makers are looked upon as the model missionaries. They are useful. Thank God for them all. But book-making is not the highest department of missionary work. I wish that we all believed more strongly in the Gospel, and felt more firmly convinced that it, and it alone, is the power of God unto salvation. What I feel this moment is, that if I were back in China again, I would do nothing but preach—preach everywhere and always. I would try and live as intensely as possible in this one thing, and care but little whether my life were long or short.

'Believe me, dear Bryson, we trifle a great deal too much in our attempts to carry on this intensely earnest work. Don't think that I am lecturing you. Far from it. I am simply telling you, as a dear friend, a

little of my *own* heart. I feel that I might have done more—nay, a hundred times more—than I have done towards bringing the Chinese to the knowledge of my Saviour, and that I would have done so if I had lived nearer to Him, and if my eye had been more single and my heart more true. I feel sometimes anxious to have another trial. And then I imagine that my best days are gone, and that nothing remains to me but to go on in the half-dead and half-alive sort of way of the past. But enough of this.'

As the months went on the idea of remaining at home presented itself to him again, associated with his duty to his children and with the claims of his delicate wife. What sharpness and severity of inward conflict is involved in deciding on the course of duty under these conditions is known to many a missionary, and to not a few who have felt themselves compelled to come to a different decision. No one can decide for his brother, or judge his brother, in these crises of life. Both the following quotations are from letters to the Rev. T. Bryson. The first refers to his children :—

'SWANSEA, *March* 14, 1872.

'My time is nearly up, and I must soon think of preparing to return. It will be harder to leave this time than the first. I hardly know what to do when I think seriously of the claims of my children upon me. My friends are very anxious to keep me here, and they talk a great deal about the bright prospects before me at home. But these things do not move



me at all, or even *touch* me. But these children speak in a language that goes to my heart. Of course my mind is made up. For *me*, I know, there can be no alternative. Still it is hard.'

Nine months later, when his prolonged furlough was very near its end, he referred to the subject once more with touching reference to his noble wife:—

'SWANSEA, *December* 19, 1872.

'The great drawback is Mrs. John's state of health. She is very weak as compared with what she was when we left China. I hope she will be able to reach China safely. As to her living long, I confess that I have hardly sufficient grounds to build even a slender hope upon. Still, she has never uttered a word to try and induce me to remain at home, but the reverse. The temptations to remain are numerous and weighty enough were I open to their influence; but it has never been an open question with me as to whether I should remain or return. As in China, so here: people have been saying from the beginning that China would never see Mr. John again. People hardly believe in the disinterestedness of missionaries. We are missionaries because we are allured by the romance of the enterprise, or because it pays *us* better than the ministry at home. So far as I am concerned, I hope to be able to convince some that missionaries may be actuated by higher and nobler principles than they are prepared to give them credit for. But it would be impossible for me to return were it not for

the genuineness of Mrs. John's missionary character. She will leave without any expectation of seeing her children again, and she is hardly fit to leave the house at all; still it is her settled conviction that it is my *duty* to return, and it is her fixed resolve to accompany me.'

The list of places visited by Mr. John in England and Scotland, as well as in Wales, includes most of the principal towns in the country, and everywhere his vivid descriptions of the work which was being done in China, and his fervid appeals for help in China's great need, proved most effective. Notwithstanding the uncertain state of his health, he was one of the speakers at the annual meeting of the Society in Exeter Hall on May 11, 1871, and thrilled the great audience by his vindication of the work of missions in China Two or three extracts must suffice as illustrations of the nervous force and charm of his style:—

'We cannot do without books, because the Chinese are a literary people, and if we publish a book it is understood all over the country. The great Book of all is of course the Bible, and you know that the Bible has been translated into Chinese. The brethren at Peking are now bringing out a new version in the Mandarin—that is, the Court dialect,—and tens of thousands and millions of persons in China will be able to read that who are not able to read the Bible in the literary style. We cannot do without the Bible in China. I am surprised how the Roman Catholics can get along without that precious Book. I do think

I might as well stay at home as go to China without my Bible. The inexhaustibility of that Book is a marvellous thing. You know the Chinese have wonderful memories. They take in anything, and can keep it in the most marvellous manner. I can give you hundreds of specimens of the wonderful power of memory of the Chinese. One of my converts once came to me and said, "I want a book." I gave him one, and he came back in a few days for another. I said, "Have you read that?" "Yes," said he. "Do you remember it?" "Yes; please ask me a few questions"; and I found that he had got it all in his mind. Then I gave him another, and in a few days he came back again and asked for another. I said, "What about the book I gave you the other day—have you read it?" "Yes." "Do you understand it?" "Yes, I understand it too." And then I gave him another, and so on, till he had exhausted all the books I had. What was then to be done? I asked him about the Bible. "Have you read that through yet?" "Yes," he said, "I have read it." "Do you understand it?" "No, I cannot say I understand it; I find it inexhaustible. I find in every chapter I read, even those that are most familiar to me, there are mysteries that I never can fathom." That is the case here, and it is the case in China too. We find that the old Book is just as inexhaustible there as it is here.

'In addition to giving them a Bible we give them theological works. We have our tracts and various theological works, that are of very great value. We give them also scientific books. I fancy that some

very good people in this vast assembly would ask me, "What have you to do with sciences? What have you as missionaries to do with teaching the Chinese history, geography, and the sciences?" Well, I believe in various gospels. I know there is but one great Gospel, the power of God unto salvation, and, as we missionaries know, the Chinese need that; there is nothing that can raise them from their moral degradation but that. We know that the preaching of the Gospel is God's established means to bring it to bear upon the hearts of the people. But then I believe there are other gospels for other diseases.

'Let me give you one or two illustrations. One of the greatest difficulties we have with the Chinese arises from their intense pride and arrogance. This is based upon ignorance—ignorance of a little geography and a little history. The Chinese have a map of the world: China is represented as covering nearly the whole of it; and as for other places, such as Africa, Europe, and Great Britain, they are represented as small islands dotting the four seas which are supposed to surround the great country of China. Now, you see, the gospel necessary for that is a little geography. They call their Emperor the Son of Heaven, and their theory in respect of him is that he is the vicegerent of God upon earth, the supreme lord of all the kings of the world. Now, the gospel for that is a little history. Again, the Chinese have many gods, but not much religion, I am sorry to say. One of their principal gods is the god of thunder, who is represented as a very ugly demon, with a mallet in his hand, surrounded

by a circle of kettle-drums, which he beats furiously, and that produces thunder. The goddess represented along with him is the goddess of rain, who is represented as pouring water out of a basin. Then there is another god, the god of wind, who is represented with a tremendous fan in his hand, which he waves to and fro, and thus produces wind. Now the gospel for that is a little science. Now the missionaries teach these things, not because they believe that history, geography, and science can save human souls, but they know that there is a great preparatory work to be done, a great amount of rubbish to be taken away. The Chinese are indebted to the missionaries for every particle of history, geography, and scientific knowledge they have. Consuls, merchants, and others will tell you missionaries are a very inferior race. Let them do a hundredth part of what the missionaries have done for the Chinese, and then it will be time enough to talk against them. Missionaries have taken an interest in the Chinese, not only in their moral and spiritual welfare, but also in their intellectual cultivation. They have done an immense amount of good in that respect. But after all, my brethren, preaching is our great work in China. This is the work to which we devote hours of every day, and I am happy to be able to tell you that preaching is doing its work in that country, and that it has precisely the same effect upon the Chinese that it has upon yourselves. Give them a book, and they read it carefully, perhaps, but they do not seem to feel. I have never seen a Chinaman weep over a book, but I have seen a Chinaman weep under a

sermon. I have myself many times made a Chinaman weep by the proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

A year later the Directors of the Society pressed upon Griffith John another task which was at the same time the highest honour they could confer. He enjoys the almost unique distinction as a missionary of having preached the annual sermon before the Directors and constituents of the London Missionary Society. No more convincing evidence could have been found of his popularity and power as a preacher than his selection for this duty. The sermon, which was published under the title 'Hope for China,' was from the text Galatians vi. 9, 'Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.' It was a most powerful and inspiring statement of the missionary position and hope, which produced a profound impression on those who heard it. The keynote was struck at the outset:—

'One of our most influential ministers told me some time ago, that he very much questioned whether the Chinese would ever be christianised, and that not a few of his brethren held views similar to his own in regard to the matter. During a missionary career of fifteen years, I have been compelled to examine and re-examine the grounds of my convictions on this subject, and I am glad to be able to tell you that my faith in the reality and ultimate success of the missionary enterprise was never stronger than it is now. I firmly believe that "in due time we shall reap, if we faint not."'

This was followed by a warning against hasty and ignorant expectations of success :—

'I have never met a heathen who seemed to be troubled with a sense of sin, or appeared to have the least desire to be delivered from its dominion. The missionary alone can form anything approaching to an adequate idea of the blindness, the hardness, the impenitence, and the godlessness of the heathen mind when the Gospel first comes into contact with it. It is not the work of a day to build up afresh the ruins of nations that have been going to decay for ages, or to overthrow ancient, subtle, and consolidated systems which are deeply rooted in the minds of the people and interwoven in the very fabric of their society.'

The reasons for belief in the reality and ultimate success of the missionary enterprise were next stated :—

(I.) 'The bright future revealed in God's word induces us to believe that "we shall reap, if we faint not."'

'Mere theorists may fancy that the world is rapidly outgrowing the Bible ; but I feel perfectly sure that as long as any practical missionary work remains to be done, the Grand Old Book, with its sublime revelations and glowing visions, will not cease to live and give life.' 'Very mistaken estimates are often formed, and missionaries are often bitterly disappointed with the failure of the bright hopes of early days. The missionary, however, is able to persevere on account of his faith in God's word and the bright future revealed therein.' 'He knows that the work is God's work, that

the plan is God's plan, that the time is God's appointed time, and that if there be danger, it is God's own word and honour that are in danger. In view of the glorious future revealed in God's word, his heart throbs with unutterable joy even in the darkest hour; and he cannot but believe, even in the midst of reverses and disappointments many, that his work is a real work, and that success is a mere question of time. Dr. Judson was asked on one occasion what were the prospects for the conversion of the Burmese. His reply was, "The prospects for the conversion of the Burmese are as bright as the promises of God." Do you ask me what are the prospects for the conversion of the Chinese? My reply is, "They are as bright as God's promises"; for, "behold, these shall come from afar; and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim"—that is China.'

(II.) 'The present aspect of the work induces me to believe that "we shall reap, if we faint not."'

A vivid bird's-eye view of the results already attained in various parts of the mission-field was given in support of this head, culminating naturally in a lengthened statement regarding the work in China. The difficulties which confronted the missionary in China were first explained. These are to be found in 'the vastness of the field,' 'the vastness of the population,' 'the antiquity and civilisation of the Chinese.' 'These ancient and civilised people have, according to their way of thinking, their Scripture and their Infallible Teacher, just as we have; and, according to their standard of orthodoxy,

the things most firmly believed by us are rank heresy.' 'The great absence of religious life and moral earnestness which characterises the nation as a nation,' 'the inertness and conservatism of the Chinese'; finally, the influence of British action towards China.

'I cannot do more than mention the opium trade, and the selfish and unchristian conduct of the British Government in respect to it; but it would be a sin to allow an opportunity of this kind to pass without referring to it. Our consuls and merchants may speak of the opium trade as a "political necessity," and as being "regulated by the ordinary laws of supply and demand." That is one way of looking at it—and a very soothing way, I suppose, to those who may be interested in it. But the Chinese themselves say that "England trades in opium because she desires to work China's ruin." And the missionary is made to feel, constantly and deeply, that this vile trade, with its disgraceful history, speaks more eloquently and convincingly to the Chinese mind *against* Christianity than he does or can do *for* it. And yet opium merchants will sometimes ask, Why is it that the Gospel does not make greater progress in China? "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you." That is one reason, at least. The trade is immoral, and a foul blot on England's escutcheon. Would to God it were possible to bring the British Government to see its unchristian character, and to induce them to "sacrifice their opium revenue on the altar of our national Christianity and China's well-being." No one can study the history of modern

missions in India, China, Polynesia, America, the West Indies, and Africa without being solemnly impressed with the fact that the positively wicked policy often pursued by Christian Governments in heathen lands, and the unchristian conduct of many of the foreign residents and visitors, have formed one main hindrance to the progress of Christ's Kingdom. When I think seriously of these, I am only astonished that we have any success to record, and not at all that it has not been greater.'

Having stated and enlarged upon these various difficulties, he proceeded to say:—

'I do not despair of the conversion of the Chinese, and I will tell you the reason why: . . . (1) The marvellous way in which God has been pleased to open up that immense Empire.

'Just think of it. Only thirty years ago no missionary durst stand up in any city in China and preach Christ. Now he may go, with the Bible in his hand and the Gospel on his lips, and declare the life-giving truth, that there is "one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," in every city and town and village in the land. Missionaries are to be found now in Peking, the capital, and in Hankow, that immense mart in the very centre of the Empire.

'An effort was recently made by the Chinese Government to close the door once more against the missionary; for that was the object of the famous "Chinese Circular." But it cannot be. That door, I verily believe, had been opened by God Himself, and it

is such that no man can shut. I am not sure but that the Chinese will make one effort more to exclude all foreigners. The exclusive and anti-foreign spirit of the officials and scholars remains unchanged. They still desire to see their great country stand apart, like a great world within itself, from the rest of the globe. But this also cannot be. That Empire is no longer self-contained and self-poised. We cannot unravel the future, and learn what is mingled in its web; but we know that that magnificent country can never return to its former state of isolation and seclusion. There are mighty forces at work which are impelling China forward, and to which she must yield whether she will or no. The world is advancing, and China must advance too.'

'(2) The noble band of men God has given China.' This was touched upon in vindication of the Protestant missionaries against the aspersions recently made upon them.

'(3) The amount of work that has been accomplished in spite of the numerous and formidable obstacles in the way.' After a statement of the various obstacles and of the results already visible, he proceeded to lift the question above statistics.

'The invisible results are, I verily believe, far greater and far more important than the visible. The growth of our work is similar to that of a plant. The root of a plant takes a longer time to grow than the stem; but maturation takes less time than either. The giant oak is wrapped up in that tiny acorn; but to develop it, the acorn must have time to strike its roots, and the

sapling must be exposed to the necessary influences. Summer and winter, spring and autumn, the stormy winds and soft breezes have all had a share in, and were all necessary to, the development of the baby-oak into the fair tree you see to-day. So it is with our work. All great work requires time.

'In looking back upon my missionary life, I can see clearly that I have committed many blunders, and that the principal cause was my hurry and bustle. I have had many an illustration in China of the old proverb, "The greater haste, the less speed." I would say, Let us beware of allowing ourselves to be driven on by the cry for results. God takes time to accomplish His grand purposes; let us do the same. There was a time when we thought the work of creation was completed within six ordinary days. Geology has taught us a different lesson. Slowly, very slowly, did God build up this wondrous fabric; but see the amount of work that He has put into it. Slowly, very slowly, is He now carrying on a still more glorious work in the moral world; but the foundation has been laid, the superstructure is advancing, in due time the temple will be finished, and again it shall be recorded, "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."

'I don't say that all our converts are genuine; neither do I say that all that are genuine are all that we could wish them to be. But I do mean to say that we have genuine Christians there, and that they have risen rather than fallen in my estimation since I have had an opportunity of comparing them with the pro-

fessing Christians of this country. Christ, I firmly believe, is taking possession of China. When it shall become wholly His, I know not,—hundreds of years hence, perhaps; tens of years hence, perhaps. It has not been given to me to know the times and the seasons. But I *know* that it is becoming His; I *feel* that it is becoming His; I *see* that it is becoming His. I have no more doubt of the ultimate evangelisation of the Chinese than I have that the sun will rise to-morrow.'

'(III.) In the supernatural origin of the Gospel, and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, we have a pledge and proof that "we shall reap, if we faint not."'

'I believe in the advancement of commerce; I believe in saturating China with a knowledge of the arts and sciences, and secular learning of every kind; I believe in introducing into China railways, telegraphs, and all our mechanical inventions and appliances; but I believe, too, that China will never rise without Christ. I don't decry commerce; still, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that there is no power in British manufactures to save souls. What the Chinese must have before they can possibly advance in the path of true progress are deep religious convictions and acute moral sensibilities. What the Chinese need above everything else is something to infuse into the nation a new and divine life; something to make them good, holy, and happy evermore. Without this they must ever remain the untruthful, dishonest, deceitful, and impure people they are; and material prosperity in their present moral condition would be a bane rather than a blessing to the nation. The religions of China

are entirely powerless to accomplish this. Buddhism and Tauism have made the people extremely superstitious, but not religious. Confucianism has dried up the religious sentiment in the Chinese mind, and left it the most worldly and unspiritual thing imaginable. Commerce can do a great deal; the arts and sciences can do a great deal; but they cannot bid the dead in trespasses and sin rise and live again. The Gospel alone is the power of God unto salvation, and salvation from her moral and spiritual misery is the great need of China. And the great need of China is the great need of India, Africa, and all heathen lands, and the Gospel is equally adapted to all. You have read of the pearls that filled the water-skins of the fainting Arab in the desert, and which he flung down with the despairing cry, "Alas, they are only pearls." Just so; your arts and sciences are only pearls. The world has a great thirst, and the Gospel alone can quench it.'

'(IV.) The relation of Christ to the world makes it absolutely certain that "we shall reap, if we faint not."' This division of the sermon was a lengthened appeal in lofty and earnest words to the Christian spirit. One passage only need be quoted:—

'It is not my habit to say anything to induce young men to devote themselves to this work, for I have a wholesome dread of man-inspired missionaries. But I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without telling you young men who are preparing for the ministry, that I thank God most sincerely and devoutly that I am a missionary. I have never regretted the step I took many years ago in opposition to the

strongly expressed wishes of my best friends; and if there is a sincere desire burning within my breast, it is that I may live and die in labouring and suffering for Christ among the heathen. Oh! it is a glorious work. I know no work like it—so real, so unselfish, so Apostolic, so Christ-like. I know no work that brings Christ so near to the soul, that throws a man back so completely upon God, and that makes the grand old Gospel appear so real, so precious, so divine. And then think of the grandeur of our aim! Our cry is, "China for Christ!" "India for Christ!" "The world for Christ!" Think of China and her hundreds of millions becoming our Lord's and His Christ's! Is there not something grand in that idea? Is there nothing soul-stirring in the prospect? Is that not an achievement worthy of the best efforts of the Church, and of the noblest powers of the most richly endowed among you? And then think of the unspeakable privilege and honour of having a share in a work which is destined to have such a glorious issue! Oh, young men, think of it; dwell upon it; and if you hear the voice of God bid you go, manfully take up your cross and go, and you will never cease to "thank Christ Jesus our Lord" for counting you worthy to be missionaries.'

The *Nonconformist*, in a special article on the anniversary meetings, referred to the preacher in the following terms:—

'The interest of the morning service drew together a congregation which completely filled Surrey Chapel. That interest was a remarkable one. It was not such

as gathers around an occasion when the preacher is one of wide fame, and which always serves to draw together a promiscuous crowd. The preacher was a young missionary, till now all but unknown. Some fifteen years ago a few of the friends of the Society heard that a young Welshman of high promise was pursuing his studies, not in one of the colleges, in an almost private way, with a view to missionary work in China. After a few years there appeared from time to time, in the "Reports" and "Chronicles," letters, and extracts from letters, of remarkable discrimination and power, bearing the signature of Griffith John. It was evident that the Society had sent out a man who had more than usual understanding of what a missionary's work in China ought to be. At the last annual meeting in Exeter Hall this same young Welshman appeared on the platform, and was introduced to the meeting by Dr. Mullens, who, at the same time, bespoke the forbearance of the assembly, as Mr. John had been suffering from failing health. Such forbearance, as the case turned out, had but very slight demands made upon it. In a few minutes the Welsh fire and the missionary ardour in the young missionary's breast conspired together to produce a speech which took captive the vast assembly, and held them in willing chains for more than an hour. At the autumnal meeting of the Congregational Union at Swansea, Mr. John was again called upon to deliver a missionary speech, and here, on his own Welsh soil, and surrounded by crowds of his own fellow-countrymen and fellow-Christians, he carried his audience with him to a height of sanctified



enthusiasm which is seldom reached. It was spoken of as the most marvellous and thrilling missionary speech which had ever been heard. It was little to be wondered at, therefore, that the Directors of the Missionary Society invited Mr. John to preach the annual sermon before the Society in Surrey Chapel, and it could have surprised no one to find the chapel filled to hear him, and that in spite of rumours that had been circulated that Mr. John's health, it was to be feared, would not allow of his undertaking the service. The thing announced was what is not often to be had—the missionary sermon of the year of one of the great Societies preached by a missionary. But one or two similar instances of the kind occur to us in connection with the London Missionary Society, the most recent being that of Dr. Legge delivering the sermon in Surrey Chapel a few years ago. It is undoubtedly the true idea. The occasion is one, not for the display of great pulpit power, as it has come, perhaps, very generally to be supposed: it is a coming together of the representatives of the Churches to receive fresh missionary impulses; and what can more directly tend to this than for a missionary of known culture, and strong sense, and warm emotion, a man who has been out into the field of missions, and looked over it, and understood and felt something of the work that needs to be done and the right way of doing it, to come into the midst of such a congregation and talk out in his own way the thought that is in him? Mr. John did this most effectively on Wednesday morning. . . . Very powerful were the appeals which in clear and

rapid tones he rung out over the vast and interested audience, and so mighty was the electrical thrill that passed through their souls that audible response in suppressed applause not infrequently broke forth.'

The effect of such preaching was no mere outburst of admiration of the power and eloquence of the preacher. The May sermon was blessed to many, and the missionary spirit throughout the country was quickened to a new enthusiasm by the appeals of the earnest missionary. One who received his first impulse towards missions by hearing Mr. John in Wales, and who after a few years followed him to China, the Rev. W. Hopkyn Rees, of Chi-Chou, tells the story and also expresses his feelings about him as follows:—

'My recollection of Dr. John goes back more than thirty years. In those days a lad was taken by his father to a missionary meeting held in a town near his native hamlet. To *see* a missionary was no common thing in those days, and in those parts, and crowds always followed wherever he was to speak. I am right in saying that no meetings were better attended than those at which missionaries were expected to be present; and what strange tales we listened to! The lad referred to sat in the gallery of the large chapel, which was crowded to its utmost capacity. The missionary entered the pulpit and took a text, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel," and, unless memory betrays, the words were added, "Yes, in China." The large audience was carried away by the rush of eloquence, and the intense interest aroused by the speaker. The impression was deep and lasting,

and to this day some remember that address. Some of the old pilgrims on life's way, sitting in the front pew—as they always do in that country,—gave vent to the feelings stirred within their breasts, and "Diolch" (in English, "Thanks") and "Amen" were often and loud. Tears flowed freely over many faces. The congregation was swayed as the wind sways the ripening and golden grain.

'The lad lost all sense of his surroundings, carried away by the wondrous effect of the address, and, turning to his father—now in glory—said: 'May I go out to help that man? I will go, father.' The seed planted that day grew and fructified. The lad began to preach when fifteen years of age, but his whole desire and determination was to become a missionary "like Griffith John." He entered college, and, when seventeen years of age, offered his services to the London Missionary Society, but, for obvious reasons, they could not be accepted at that age. When twenty-one years of age the same person was ordained pastor of a church in rural Wales. The same year Dr. John was home again, and in September 1881 he gave two addresses at the ordination of a young Welshman who was proceeding to China as a missionary. The services were memorable, and Dr. John's addresses created a most profound impression, though, this time, delivered in English. The lad referred to before determined to wait no longer, renewed his offer to the London Mission, which was graciously accepted, and in 1883 he accompanied the sainted Gilmour to Peking; so that now, at the

close of twenty-one years' service in China, I am proud to call myself a son of Dr. John in the missionary faith. Can I ever fail to thank God for the meeting where I first heard the great missionary?

'On my arrival in Shanghai in 1883, I met Dr. John again, who had come to meet his wife on her return from the homeland. He took me for a walk, and we held sweet converse in our mother tongue. He gave me, then, new visions of the China yet to be, warned me against certain tendencies in the actions and plans of new-comers, placed before me high ideals, and gave me sane and helpful advice. It was an inspiration to listen to him, as his soul glowed with the enthusiasm born of the Spirit of God, and I determined to do my utmost, by the help of God, to possess the same faith and zeal.

'I did not see Dr. John again for some years. In 1901 it became necessary for me to visit Hankow in connection with the indemnity arising out of the terrible losses incurred in the dark days of 1900. Dr. John was as active, energetic, enthusiastic, and fresh-spirited as ever, with both hands full of work for the redemption of China's millions. It was my privilege to preach in his church, and to do so from a pulpit presented by the Welsh churches. Two hymns from our native language, which I had translated into Chinese, were sung on that occasion, and they aroused tender echoes of the sweet singers at home. We talked much, and prayed together, and I caught new glimpses of the glory of the work as I conversed with the Grand Old Man.

'During my twenty-one years in this land I have received scores of letters from him, but most of them were destroyed when my house was burned by the Boxers. A good old book says, "A wise son heareth his father's instruction." I have had occasion all these years to consult "my father in the faith," and have sought advice and counsel at his hands. Complicated and difficult questions arise often during the career of a missionary in a strange land. Young ones, especially, are in need of guidance, and still more so when trying to organise new work in a new sphere, as was my lot. Dr. John never failed me. His unrivalled experience and wise judgment were always given to me unstintingly. He has helped me out of some tight corners, and given unerring guidance in times of anxiety and doubt. Chi-Chou Mission owes more to him than any feeble words of mine can express, and I can never sufficiently thank God for his generous sympathy, wise counsel, and wealth of love. I write of him as I have been privileged to know him. His labours cannot be tabulated, though the records of some of his work may be found in the histories of Bible Societies and Tract Societies and our own beloved Society. We magnify God in him, and pray the Father in Heaven that many more years be added to his life, that he may bring to fruition some of the schemes which are so fertile in his brain, all for the uplifting of the Cross of Christ and the salvation of this people.'

The furlough was extended several months beyond the time originally fixed, but at length on February 8,

1873, Mr. and Mrs. John sailed from Liverpool by the s.s. 'Hector.' It was a sad and anxious start. Mrs. John was so unwell that she was not fit to travel, and the parting with their three children had been a very severe trial. The voyage did her no good, and at length as the vessel entered the harbour of Singapore she passed away. Some details of the voyage and of her last hours were sent by Mr. John to his friend Mr. Jacob:—

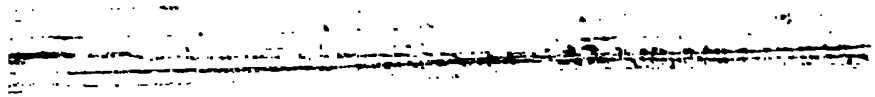
'We found the Red Sea very oppressive, and the Indian Ocean was not much better. I bore it well; but my poor wife found it very trying. Ere this you have been informed of her death, which took place as we were entering the harbour of Singapore. She evidently took a fresh chill on board the tender at Liverpool. We were told to be on board at 2 P.M., but she did not start till about 4. It was a cold day, and there was no place on board into which my poor wife could retire. She never rallied. Gradually her throat, mouth, and tongue blistered and swelled. Eating and drinking became a painful task, and her sufferings latterly were very great. But she bore all with wonderful patience and resignation to her Father's will. Whilst quite prepared to depart and be with Christ, she hoped and believed to the last that she should see China, and labour a little time longer for the good of the Chinese. The day before she died she told me that she believed she should get better; "but," she added, "I am in my Saviour's hands. I have placed myself there that He may do with me as He thinks best. Do you think He will accept me? I am



'hoto] [*Lai Koog, Hankow.*

MRS. MARGARET J. JOHN.

***Born in Madagascar**, Nov.* 17, 1830; *died at Singapore, March* 24, 1873.



very unworthy." "Yes," said I, "He has done that long since, my dear." "Yes, He has," was her reply. And then she talked about devoting herself to the missionary work more heartily than ever.'

The missionary's wife too often gets scant recognition in the story of missionary life and work. Her part is usually quieter and more unobtrusive than her husband's, though it involves quite as much of the strain, and makes as large a demand on faith and grace. When Mr. John got back to Hankow he wrote to Dr. Mullens a brief statement, which presents a very striking picture of an exceptionally gentle, patient, and high-toned Christian woman :—

'Believing that work is *the* balm for me at present, I have plunged into it with all the energy I can command. The language is as fluent as ever, and I am able to enter fully into every department of the work. How I shall get on without my dear wife, I know not. For eighteen years she was to me a loving, devoted, self-sacrificing, and efficient helpmate. We have a goodly number of women in our little Church in Central China, and this is to be ascribed in a great measure to her exertions and influence. The mission-field has never seen a more true-hearted missionary. She was in every respect a born missionary. Her parents were missionaries; her birthplace was Madagascar; the atmosphere which she breathed from her childhood was a missionary atmosphere; and when she dedicated herself to the missionary enterprise she did so with the firm resolve to live and die a missionary. She was kind and genial in her bearing towards the

heathen; she invariably received the converts as brothers and sisters in Christ; she never failed to enter into my plans cheerfully and heartily; and she was ever prepared to sacrifice everything in order to promote the interests of the work. She has lived contentedly in inland cities; and many a time has she remained alone for weeks and months while I have been travelling in distant provinces, and that without hearing but seldom from me. I have seen her attend on the sick in the hospital, and, from pure love to Christ and sympathy with human suffering, perform services of kindness which were extremely loathsome in themselves, and from which she felt an instinctive shrinking. Had it not been for the genuineness of her missionary character, it would have been impossible for her to return to China. When I spoke to her about the matter, her words were: "I believe it is your duty to return to your work. I don't believe that God's blessing will follow you if you remain at home." When Mrs. Griffiths, late of Madagascar, was asked how she felt in the prospect of parting with her daughter, she said: "If she were well I should not mind it so much; but I am proud that I have a daughter who can do what she is doing." And well might the aged mother of 81, with the missionary fire still flaming in her breast, be proud of her daughter; for few could do what she did. She was one of the meekest, most patient, most unselfish, and withal bravest of women. In her Master's cause she seemed capable of daring all things and enduring all things. To appreciate her thoroughly it was necessary



to know her intimately. She was no talker, and especially about herself and her work, but she could act, and that with wonderful self-abnegation and moral courage. In her own quiet, unostentatious way she accomplished a great work; and though she has entered into her rest, the blessed influence of her life and labours still remains, and will remain for years to come.'

The Rev. T. Bryson, who had exceptional opportunities of seeing and knowing her in the course of her life in Hankow, says:—

'I should like to tell you of the love I bore to the first Mrs. John, and my great admiration of her quiet, motherly, beautiful Christian character, and how nobly she sustained her husband in his consecration to the highest and most self-sacrificing ideals of his missionary life. One or two of the letters, especially those relating to his return to China after the furlough of 1873, will give you some hints of this. No missionary's wife ever deserved to be had in remembrance as "faithful unto death" more than Margaret John, or fulfilled more truly the words chosen by her bereaved husband as descriptive of her life, and inscribed on a tablet erected to her memory, and placed on the walls of the Chinese church, "She hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also."

'After I had been alone in Wuchang for about a year, as the Mission was being reinforced by the arrival of Dr. and Mrs. Shearer, for whom there was no house accommodation in Hankow, Dr. John and his family came over temporarily to live with me in Wuchang.

The memory of these days when Mrs. John was as a mother to me (she was often taken by the Chinese to be my mother when we were out walking together in the city) is one of the most precious recollections of my life in Central China.'

Sixteen years after, when the need for a separate hospital for women began to be felt in the Mission, Mr. John built one and called it the 'Margaret' Hospital, in memory of his wife. One of the native assistants spoke of the work he had seen her doing among the patients in the Mission hospital, and said: 'I have heard much about love, but I never saw love until I saw Mrs. Margaret John.'



CHAPTER XII

GROWING WORK AND WIDENING INFLUENCE

THE period between Dr. John's first and second home-coming was one of continuously happy and successful work, and of growing influence. He was greatly cheered, when he got back to Hankow, by the warmth of the welcome given him by the native Church, and by finding that there had been decided progress during his absence. Some of the converts had gone back, either through failure in character or lukewarmness, but the majority had stood firm in their Christian profession, and the numbers in the Church had increased. The zeal and earnestness of the members evidently received a new impulse as the result of his return. Self-help became more thoroughly recognised as a duty by the Church, and renewed efforts for the evangelisation and salvation of others were made in Hankow itself and in the country around.

One result of this evangelistic zeal is interesting, because it reveals a side of native non-Christian life and thought which is not generally recognised. In 1874 it was decided to open the city chapel in the evening as well as during the day for evangelistic

preaching, which was to be carried on chiefly by the voluntary help of the members of the Church. The fact that it was considered safe to open a Christian preaching-place after dark was a good evidence of the peacefully recognised position which Christianity had gained. The suggesting cause of the new effort was the activity of a non-Christian Preaching Association. Mr. John told the story in a letter to the Missionary Society :—

'Besides these paid native agents, several of the private members have been giving us most valuable assistance during the last four months. They have been the chief speakers at our night services. These services were commenced in the month of August, and have been carried on with considerable spirit and vigour ever since. A brief account of their origin will, I think, interest you. Soon after our arrival in Hankow, more than twelve years ago, the natives themselves began to hold night services for public preaching in certain temples and open spaces along the thoroughfares. I was told at the time that the movement was set on foot in imitation and rivalry of the Protestant missionary. And such was probably the case; for though it be by law required that portions of the Sacred Edict be read in every district by local officers on the first and fifteenth of every month, in public halls set apart for the purpose, and though this order has been complied with for a hundred and fifty years with more or less regularity, yet this was the first time for the people themselves in this part of the country to take the matter in hand.

The institution is connected with certain benevolent halls, for which Hankow is justly celebrated; and all the working expenses are defrayed by the native merchants, shop-keepers, and others. The poorer people of a neighbourhood will sometimes raise a small sum of money among themselves, invite a few preachers, and hold a series of meetings for their own special benefit. The preachers, who are for the most part undergraduates, receive a small stipend for their services. Their text-book is the Sacred Edict, one of the best known and most highly respected works in China. It consists of sixteen moral maxims, in sixteen sentences of seven words each, written by the Emperor Kang-hi, and amplified by his son and successor. The popular editions are issued with an amplified paraphrase in the Mandarin dialect. In its tone this celebrated work is utterly godless. It holds Buddhism and Tauism in supreme contempt, and denounces Roman Catholicism as rank heresy. All religious rites and practices are discouraged, and the people are told plainly that the only gods they need concern themselves about are the two living Buddhas at home—that is, their parents.

'These preachers, however, find that bare morality will not do, and that if they would secure the attention and move the hearts of their audiences the religious element must not be dispensed with; and hence they supply themselves with selections of moral tales, drawn from all quarters, and richly interlarded with Buddhist and Tauist legends and myths. This it is, I believe, that lends to their preaching any little

power and attraction it may have. So far as I can learn, they never allude to us or our work, and, so far as I can see, there is nothing in the movement to excite either hope or fear on our part. I have to thank it, however, for one good result.

'In the month of July I attended one of those open-air meetings, held on the piece of ground occupied at present by our new hospital. Whilst standing there, in the midst of a large crowd of listeners, the duty of opening the chapels for night services forced itself upon my conscience. I had thought of it many a time before, but never felt it till now. At our next church meeting I spoke to the converts on the subject, and asked them if there were any among them who would volunteer their services. My appeal met with a prompt and hearty response, and within two or three weeks seven or eight of our best men were to be seen night after night proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation according to their ability. Most of the attempts were lame and feeble at the beginning; but by degrees confidence, strength, and readiness were acquired, and by this time some of these brethren have developed into admirable preachers. We commenced at the hospital chapel, but the volunteers soon became dissatisfied with the limited scope afforded to them there, and expressed a desire to hold services at the principal chapel, which is situated in the centre of the town. Of course I was only too glad to gratify their wishes, and ever since three night-services in the week have been held at each of these chapels. Then some of the converts in

Han-Yang expressed themselves as inclined to try the experiment there, and it was resolved at once that the doors of that chapel should be thrown open three nights in the week. The converts of one of the other missions, hearing of what was going on in our chapels, applied for permission to carry on a similar work in their own. Thus the idea was warmly taken up, and so far, has been very heartily worked out.

'How long the impulse may last it is impossible to tell, but, from all that appears now, it bids fair to do so for some time at least. In any case, good must result from it. The truth is more widely made known. The congregations are often very large, and most of the hearers are men who either cannot or will not attend in the daytime. The volunteers are deeply interested in the work, and evidently derive much reflex benefit from it. The whole Church is more or less stimulated and ennobled by it. It is also producing a favourable impression on the heathen around. The preachers are able to tell those who call the Christian religion the "rice-eating religion" that the charge is a libel, and that, so far from depending on the Church for their sustenance, they are giving their services gratuitously, and that the very oil and candles which light up the chapels are paid for by themselves. The heathen are beginning to see this, and it is certain that the tendency of what they see is to remove their prejudices and give them a more exalted view of Christianity and the Christian Church.'

On October 23, 1874, Mr. John married again. The second Mrs. John was one whom he had known

ever since he went to China. She was an American lady, the widow of Dr. Jenkins, a missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and had been living in Shanghai for three years after her husband's death, engaged in active Christian work among the natives and also among foreign sailors. Mrs. Jenkins was a cultured and able woman, deeply spiritual, and with exceptional power and consecration as a worker. Her advent to Hankow was a great addition to the strength of the Mission, for knowing the Shanghai dialect well she gave herself earnestly to the acquisition of the Hankow dialect, and speedily entered with great energy into work among the women. The result of this was soon seen in the increasing number of women who found courage to confess themselves Christians and join the Church, and in the gathering thus of whole families into the Christian fold. Mrs. John's ability as a Christian worker evidently affected very powerfully her husband's views on the value of unmarried European Christian ladies as missionaries to the heathen. At that time the idea of sending out unmarried ladies to the mission-field was comparatively novel, and the experiment was being watched with considerable anxiety and hesitation. At the beginning of 1875, Mr. John received a letter from Dr. Mullens asking, on behalf of the Directors of the London Missionary Society, for his opinion as to the expediency or otherwise of sending lady missionaries to China, and as to the work which they could do. In reply, he wrote from Hankow, February 16, 1875, a very decided expression of his opinion.

'You want to know what kind of mission work might be undertaken in our stations by duly qualified Christian women other than missionaries' wives. There are three kinds of work which might be carried on by foreign Christian women at this place, namely, conducting classes for female converts, visiting heathen women at their homes, and superintending schools for girls. These three kinds of work are exceedingly important; and no station can be said to be complete in its organisations, and thoroughly efficient in its operations, where they are wanting. They all lie, however, beyond the sphere of the missionary. Since my return I have been doing all in my power to get up a good girls' school, and have utterly failed, whilst Mrs. Scarborough, of the Wesleyan Mission, has succeeded admirably. Though the female converts connected with our Church attend divine services with great regularity, I should find it impossible to get them to attend a Bible class established for themselves exclusively and conducted by me. And as to visiting heathen women at their homes, I hardly need remark that it would be worse than useless for any man, whether foreign or native, to attempt it. This kind of work, then, if done at all, must be done by Christian women; and in order to carry it on efficiently two classes of female agents are necessary, namely, foreign and native. Too much importance cannot be attached to the native element. So far as schools and visiting are concerned, the foreign agent can do little more than direct, superintend, and encourage the native. This, however, is essential. Without it the native

force would be misdirected, and would soon expend itself. The classes for the female converts would be more exclusively in the hands of the foreign agent. In course of time women might be trained to undertake the conduct of them; for the present the entire work would devolve upon the foreign teacher.

'As to the foreign agent, there can be no doubt that the missionary's wife has immense advantages over any other, if equally qualified in other respects. Let her possess the necessary mental, moral, and spiritual endowments for the enterprise, and it is certain that she will carry on the work which I have now specified as no other woman can. Time, however, is an important element; and there are missionaries' wives who, though richly endowed with all the requisite gifts and graces, and anxious to devote them to active missionary work, are unable to do much on account of the multiplicity of domestic duties to which they have to attend. Yet I have often been surprised to see how much can be accomplished by an earnest, devoted, Christ-loving woman even when placed in circumstances of the most unfavourable and trying kind. My reply, then, to your first question is this: There is no kind of mission work in this station that might not be better accomplished by the missionary's wife than by any other, provided she possess the necessary qualifications and is able to command the requisite time. And I am glad to be able to add that Mrs. John is able and willing to undertake the female department of the work connected with this Mission. At Shanghai she was actively engaged in mission work. Besides super-

intending schools, she did much in the way of visiting heathen women at their homes. Her heart is wholly devoted to God, and her chief desire is to be the means of elevating the moral and spiritual condition of the women in these parts whilst permitted to dwell among them. Since her arrival at Hankow she has been studying the dialect of the place, and her progress is, I think, remarkable. In due time she will be in every way qualified for the task which awaits her here. In addition to superintending schools, she will have her classes in Hankow, Wuchang, and Han-Yang. What we shall need in this Mission is a grant of £50 or £100 towards the employment of native women as school teachers and Bible readers; and this, I have no doubt, the Directors will gladly make, should they deem it desirable to extend their work by female agency in China.

'Were I differently situated, my reply to the above question would probably have been different. Were my wife unable or unwilling to undertake the work which I have described, I might ask for a female agent; I don't know that I should, but it is possible. Were I an unmarried man I should certainly object to a young lady being sent out to join me. I should say emphatically, never send unmarried women to a mission constituted exclusively of unmarried men; to do so would be the most effectual means of bringing the whole Mission into disgrace in the eyes of the Chinese. As matters stand, my only request is that the Directors will kindly assist my wife to carry out her plans by furnishing her with the necessary means.

'You will probably conclude from the tone of this letter that I am not a strong believer in unmarried female agents for China. I am sorry to find myself in opposition to my friend Mr. Edkins on this question, but I must confess that such is the case. Theoretically I have but little faith in the scheme, and the slight knowledge I have of the practical working of the agency in this country has not tended to remove my doubts. What we really need are genuine missionaries' wives—women as devoted to the work as their husbands are. Thank God there are many such women in China, and they are doing a noble work.'

A few months later he referred to the subject again :—

'We shall certainly not make an application for an English female missionary. With Mrs. John at Hankow, and, I hope, Mrs. Bryson at Wuchang, this station will not *require* one. Our wives will be able to do a *great deal* more for the work than young ladies could. I confess to a deep scepticism in regard to the whole scheme of employing "English female missionaries" in China. Time will show, but I feel sure that you are going to *waste* a good deal of money and introduce elements of discord into missions.'

Since then an ever-enlarging experience of what consecrated Christian women can do in the mission-field as evangelists, as teachers, and as doctors has shown how groundless and unworthy were the fears which many had in the earlier days of the movement. Dr. John, as a wise man, has advanced with the times.

Probably he still might say that, 'all things being equal,' the married woman who works in close association with her husband has greater influence than the unmarried; but experience of the work of unmarried women in Hankow and Central China has altered his old opinion. There is not now a kinder and more sympathetic friend or a more appreciative observer of the Christian service rendered by lady missionaries than the veteran head of the London Missionary Society's Mission in Hankow.

Mrs. John brought her love for the sailors with her from Shanghai to Hankow, and speedily found that she had an open door for work among them. There were usually one or more gunboats anchored in the river for the defence of foreign rights, and also to keep order among foreign merchant sailors at the great treaty port. Hankow being a great centre of the tea trade, there were usually merchant vessels there bringing merchandise and carrying away cargoes of tea. During the brief tea season, especially, a fleet of swift steamers gathered to carry off the new season's teas as rapidly as possible to the thirsty Western world. The European crews of these vessels were exposed to great and constant temptations, and there were no special agencies at work for their help. They soon discovered that a friend had come to whom their interests were very precious. Meetings were arranged for their special benefit, and temperance and evangelistic work was carried on. 'Jack' is very responsive to kindness, and God blessed the efforts of His servants. Writing to Mr. Jacob on May 26, 1875, Mr. John says:—

'During these last ten days we have had a series of services in my house for the benefit of the sailors on board the tea ships visiting this port at this season. They have been wonderful meetings. Many have been deeply impressed, and ten at least have been really converted. At the meetings I speak for twenty or twenty-five minutes, and then throw the meeting open to all present. After the meeting is over I meet those who are impressed in my study. The night before last there were three men in my study weeping like children on account of their past sins, and expressing a strong desire to lead a better life. I point them to Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour from sin and its consequences, and this message I find to be the "power of God unto salvation" to sinners as hardened as I have ever known. My dear wife is my "right-hand man" in this work. She prays and speaks with great power at these meetings. The singing is in her hands entirely, and it could not be in better hands. We sing those simple American hymns which have become so popular in England since Moody and Sankey's visit, and they are doing a good work. Our missionary work is progressing also.'

This work was steadily and successfully continued. In 1884 a building was erected by private contributions to provide more suitable and adequate accommodation, and testimony came from many quarters of the great value of this gracious ministry. In that year Mr. John wrote :—

'A good work is going on among the blue-jackets. We have had three gunboats here this year. The first

came up without a Christian on board, and left with six; the second came up in the same condition, and left with four; the present one came up with two, and will leave with eight or ten. The Sailors' Rest is to be opened to-morrow evening. It is a very pretty little building, standing in the corner of our compound where the bamboo mound used to stand. It is a real ornament to the compound and the settlement. I trust it will be a great comfort and a great blessing in many ways to many.'

Less than eighteen months after the date of this letter the earnest, loving heart had ceased to beat. Writing to an intimate friend of Mrs. John when on his way to Shanghai to bury his wife, Mr. John was able to tell her not only of the death, but of a touching incident which had occurred on the journey:—

'Her death was in perfect harmony with her life. Jesus was her Lord, her Saviour, her Beloved. She loved Him passionately, and served Him faithfully. It was her delight to speak of Him in season and out of season, and she was the means of leading many souls to Him. Yesterday we met the "Sual" at Kiu-kiang. The first officer is a young man who was converted some months ago through Mrs. John's instrumentality, and who is now an earnest worker for God. When he heard I was on board the "Kiang Kwan" he came to see me. His eyes were full of tears, and he said, "I feel as if I had lost my mother." When he was at Shanghai a few days since, a lady there said that what she did not like about Mrs. John was that she *would* talk about religion. "Yes," replied the young man, "but you must

remember that that is the very reason why I am a Christian to-day. I should never have been a Christian but for Mrs. John." She was very intensely earnest, and worldly men and women, whether in the Church or out of the Church, could not understand her. But she has been the means of leading scores and scores of people from the darkness and misery of sin into the light and joy of the salvation in Christ.'

Later in the same year another friend was told :—

'We are having splendid meetings with the sailors these weeks. This is the tea season, and we have been holding special meetings for the benefit of the sailors. The dear little Rest is often crammed, and the meetings have been fruitful in blessed results. From twenty to thirty have been brought to God during these five or six weeks, some backsliders have been restored, some dead Christians have been made alive again, and a large number have found Christ for the first time. What strikes some of us is, that the very spirit of the departed one seems to be resting upon us. We feel as if she herself in spirit was working with us and bidding us go on. "It is *expedient* for you that I should go away." What Christ said of Himself is true of every one of His true servants. We cannot *see* this always, and the heart is slow to believe that it can be so. Expedient that the dearest one on earth should go away! Impossible! And yet it must be so, for God's name is love, and He does all things well.

.

'As one draws near the end of life, one gets to feel that the one thing in it of any real value is what has its

spring in God and its consummation in God,—*from* God and *for* God. I look back on my life, and I feel that much of it is utterly rotten, tested by this standard. How many of my most conspicuous deeds have had their inspiration in self,—done, not *for* Christ; done, not because inspired by the love of Christ,—good deeds in themselves, but morally worthless in their results to me. May God forgive the past—blot out the sins of our *good* deeds. How we are made to feel day by day that we have nothing to fall back upon but the blood of Jesus—the blood that cleanseth from all sin.'

The influence of his second marriage on the personal life of Mr. John was as marked as its helpfulness in the work of the Mission. Like all high-strung and eager natures, he has been liable to suffer from fits of depression. After his return to China this depression of spirits was frequent and acute. He was living alone, and though he told his friends that he was being well looked after by old and faithful servants, the shadow of his recent great bereavement rested heavily upon him, and was made harder to bear by the weakening effects of an attack of dysentery. He found his anodyne for grief in giving himself with redoubled energy to his work; but this did not suffice. He confessed in more than one letter that 'fits of deep depression are not uncommon,' that he is 'very lonely and depressed, and does not know how he can go on,' and it is probable he would have had a serious break-down had not this new light and love come into his life. The house became a home again, and the busy man found that refreshment of spirit and helpful

sympathy which growing intimacy with a like-minded and clever woman was fitted to afford. Mrs. John was musical, and her rich voice and skill in playing gave great enjoyment to her husband. She was very fond of flowers, and was successful in growing them, so that the little garden became a constant delight.

The following extract from a letter written in October 1876 gives a bright peep at this side of their life:—

'We have in front of our house a flower-garden. Mrs. John is extremely fond of flowers, and when she comes home from her work in the city she generally spends an hour or two in the garden. It is a good thing for her health thus to keep out in the open air, and it seems for us the prettiest garden in Hankow. The sight of it these mornings bathed in morning dews, whose every drop outvies Golconda's gem, is most lovely. There is a dahlia in front of our door with seventy large red flowers on it. It is difficult to look at so much beauty without thinking of the beautiful God who makes all these things.'

Just ten years later, writing to another intimate friend, the deep pathos of his bereavement comes out in connection with the garden:—

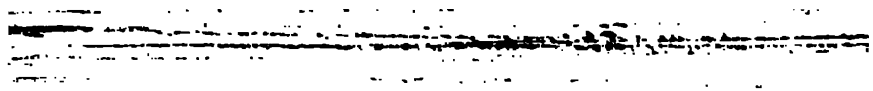
'On my return yesterday I found four beautiful Yucca Gloriosas in full bloom—the first time I have ever seen them in bloom. They were planted by her years ago, and she longed to see them in bloom, but never did. Have you ever seen these flowers? They are worth going miles to see. They wing my thoughts



[*Photo. G. Dimmock, New York.*

MRS. JEANNETTE JOHN.

***Born in New York, July** 26, 1834; **died at Hankow, Dec.** 29, 1883.*



and tell me of the beauty in which she herself
ed. Do you think the glorified ones take
in the beauties of earth? Mrs. John was
tely fond of flowers. Is she so still? God is
, and yet He must delight Himself in the
l things which His own hands have made.
e that the spirits of His perfected children do
icipate in His joys in this respect?'

ig, independent, and masterful as Mr. John has
his views of truth and convictions of duty, he
ays been open-minded and sensitive to new
s, new views and aspects of truth, and new
ons. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the
d prominence given in his writing and speaking
these years to certain spiritual aspects of the
s largely, if unconsciously, due to the influence
ife. At any rate it is evident that, coincidently
marriage there came to him the beginning of
deepening of the spiritual life which greatly
l his nature and increased his power.

n article by him in the *Life of Faith* in 1894,
he following remarkable statement:—'I was
ars old when I joined the Church, I preached
t sermon when I was fourteen, and yet I
missionary for twenty years before I had a
n of Christ as an ever-present Saviour from sin.
ion of Christ is absolutely necessary for success.'

time of this enlightenment must have been
he year 1875. Early in 1877 he wrote to his
friend, Mr. Jacob:—

own soul is going out in strong desires towards

God these days. Read Ephesians iii. 16-20, and you will see what I am praying for, "filled with the fulness of God." I long to be filled with divine knowledge, divine wisdom, divine love, divine holiness, to the utmost extent of my capacity. I want to feel that "all the currents of my soul are interfused in one channel deep and wide, and all flowing towards the heart of Christ." I hardly begin to know what treasures there are for us in Christ. It seems to me that every one of us might be spiritually and ought to be unspeakably mightier than we are. It is the Holy Ghost in us that is everything, and the Father is willing to bestow Him upon the weakest if he will but ask in the spirit of implicit faith and entire self-surrender. My cry these days is for a Pentecost, first on myself and my missionary brethren, and then on the native Church, and then on the heathen at large.'

This train of thought evidently influenced him in the choice of his subject for address at the Shanghai Missionary Conference in May 1877. The first general Conference of Protestant Missionaries in China, held in 1877, was a very small gathering compared with that which was held in 1890. Twenty Missionary Societies were represented by 126 missionaries of both sexes, the American element predominating. Griffith John accepted very heartily the proposal for a Conference, and took an active part in the proceedings. He spoke with more or less fulness in the discussions on a great variety of subjects: Buddhism and Tauism, preaching, medical missions, Christian literature, secular literature, the elevation of the native Church, the opium

question, questionable practices among the converts, treaty rights, systematic co-operation among Societies, and the training of the native agency. His most important contribution to the Conference was an address on 'The Holy Spirit in connection with Mission Work,' based on Luke xi. 13, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?' It was a very comprehensive, interesting, and searching statement of his views on the subject. He began from the position that the missionary was engaged in a work which was primarily and essentially spiritual, and that the spiritual aspect and aim of his work must always be foremost in all his thoughts.

'We are in China in obedience to the command of our Lord; and the purpose of our Mission is to disciple and make Christians of this great nation. . . .

'This is a great spiritual work, and to secure success in it we need the abiding presence of the Spirit, and through the Spirit such a full baptism of power as will perfectly fit each one of us for the special work which God has given him to do.'

'I. The Holy Spirit is the source of all spiritual illumination.' Knowledge, even religious knowledge, without spiritual illumination is of the letter, and its possession brings no spiritual power. 'The things of God as facts and doctrines are fully revealed in this blessed Book. . . . Still the Bible is not enough for us. The vital question is, how are we to *know* "the things that are freely given us of God"? How are

we to reach the sunlit summits of full assurance about them?'

'Then look at our converts. The ease with which many of them acquire a knowledge of the facts and doctrines of the Bible is simply astonishing. But where is the missionary who does not lament the lack of *spiritual* discernment on the part of the great bulk of his converts? The truths that are lodged in their intellects, and which they accept as unquestionable verities, do not appear to move them deeply. Their spiritual nature is not intensely quickened and greatly expanded by "the things of the Spirit of God," neither are their moral activities powerfully energised by them. They lack that divinely illumined, soul-transforming apprehension of spiritual truth essential to the development of a strong, manly, noble Christian character.'

'II. The Holy Spirit is the immediate source of all holiness. The missionary must above all things be a holy man. The ideal teacher of the Chinese is a holy man. "He is entirely sincere, and perfect in love. He is magnanimous, generous, benign, and full of forbearance. He is pure in heart, free from selfishness, and never swerves from the path of duty in his conduct. He is deep and active like a fountain, sending forth his virtues in due season. He is seen, and men revere him; he speaks, and men believe him; he acts, and men are gladdened by him. He possesses all heavenly virtues. He is one with Heaven." This is a lofty ideal; but the Chinese do not look upon it as existing in fancy or imagination only. They believe that it has been realised in some instances at least;

and I am convinced that no Christian teacher can be a *great spiritual* power in China in whom this ideal is not embodied and manifested in an eminent degree. He must be more than a good man (*shan jen*); he must be a holy man (*sheng jen*), exhibiting "the vigour of every right purpose, and the intensity of every devout affection." He must be a man full of the Holy Ghost, and the divinity within must energise mightily through him. He must be a man who will take time, not only to master the language and literature of this people, but to be holy. It is not ourselves—our poor selves—the Chinese want to see, but God in us.'

'Such holiness is needful also in the Church as the only convincing evidence of the efficacy of Christ's work.'

'III. The Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual unity.'

'IV. He is the Fount of all true joy.' Under this head is an interesting paragraph on the need for spiritual joy among the converts to replace the joys they have lost:—

'We as missionaries need the fulness of this joy. Without it our work will be a burden to us, and we shall toil on with the hearts of slaves; and the hearts of slaves are never strong. But especially do our native brethren need it. They had their pleasures in their heathen condition, both religious and sensuous. We have taken these away from them. How are they to be kept from falling a-lusting for the flesh-pots of Egypt—for the leeks, and onions, and garlic of their pagan life? There can be only one way: the new religion must be made a joy to them.'

'V. The Holy Spirit is the source of power in dealing with souls.'

'VI. He is the inspirer of all true prayer.'

The exposition of the subject under these headings was followed by three questions:—'(1) Are we and our converts *filled* with the Holy Ghost? (2) Is a new Pentecost *possible*? (3) How is the fulness of the Spirit to be obtained?' The address ended:—

'I want to return from this Conference, not only stimulated in mind, and enriched with a store of valuable information, but filled with the Holy Ghost. China is *dead—terribly* dead. Our plans and organisations can do very little for this great people. They want *life*. Christ came to give life; and He is not the I *was*, but the I *am*. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The secret of the success of the Apostles lay not in what they did and said, but in the presence of Christ in them and with them. They saw with the eyes of Christ, felt with His heart, and worked with His energies. They were nothing; Christ was everything. Christ was living, breathing, and triumphing in their personal lives. Their entire nature being replete with His life, their spirits bathed in His light, and their souls kindled with the fires of His love, they moved in the midst of men as embodiments of supernatural power. They spake with the demonstration of the Spirit; when they came into contact with men, a mysterious energy went out of them, and under their vitalising touch dead souls started into life. The Spirit had taken hold of the highest faculties of their nature, and was working with them

according to His own will. Brethren, this is what we must be, if this mighty Empire is to be moved through us. But to be this the throne of grace must be our refuge—the secret place of the Most High must be our daily and hourly habitation. We must *take time* to become filled with His power; we must *take time* to be *holy*. Let us put our desires into one heart-felt petition for a baptism of the Holy Ghost, and not cease to present it until we have prevailed. So Elijah prayed; he threw himself on the ground, resolved not to rise again till his request was granted. So Jacob WRESTLED with the angel. So Daniel set *his face* unto the Lord his God. So the disciples continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.'

The general progress of the Mission during the decade 1873-1882 was steady and encouraging, but there was no outstanding feature that made the years memorable.

Another and larger mission hospital was built in 1874 in place of the old one, at a cost of £1350, which was contributed by natives as well as by Europeans. A year later Dr. Kenneth Mackenzie joined the Mission as medical missionary, and he was Mr. John's companion six months later on that first journey to the Wei village when the excited country mob attacked them with such violence as to seriously endanger their lives. This experience of trouble was a very exceptional one. As a rule the evangelistic tours which Mr. John kept up at frequent intervals were marked by the friendliness of the people and by great enjoyment in preaching to them.

CHAPTER XIII

EVANGELISING BY THE PEN—COLPORTAGE

THE pioneer of Protestant Missions in China, Robert Morrison, forbidden to preach, speedily discovered the power of the press. He and his colleague, Milne, devoted themselves to the preparation of Christian literature. One of their tracts, 'The Two Friends,' is even now of great value. Griffith John had freedom to preach, and power as a preacher; but he also soon discovered the value of the printed page in China, and was not slow to avail himself of it. After his first furlough literary work increasingly claimed his attention. He has sketched his own methods of working in his sketch of the character and work of his senior evangelist:—

'Every morning, Sunday excepted, about half-past eight, he is in my study, where he stops till one. These four or five hours are spent in writing books, tracts, or letters, and in reading and expounding some important native or foreign works. Between one and two he dines. At half-past two he is in the chapel, where he remains till five, doing his part in the preaching, talking, and debating which go on during these hours. On the door of the chapel and in different parts of the

city he has notices posted up, informing all that between the hours of 6 and 9 P.M. he will be in his vestry behind the chapel ready to receive any who may wish to converse on Christian subjects. On Sundays he generally takes some part in the services, and when I am absent the whole work and its responsibilities devolve upon him. He is sometimes sent to visit the out-stations to instruct the catechumens and strengthen the hands of the native evangelists.'

The work of such an assistant or pundit is not simply to copy what has been written by the missionary. His duty is to give the necessary literary accuracy and finish to the work of the foreigner. Even in the use of languages nearly related to our own, it is no uncommon experience to find that knowledge which is quite full enough and accurate enough for all ordinary purposes is not equal to the niceties of an official document or a written treatise. In China, where exactitude and refinement of literary expression have been cultivated for centuries as a fine art, and are so highly esteemed, it is practically impossible for a foreigner to be sure that he will avoid mistakes which would at once be detected by the trained eye and offend the refined instincts of a cultivated Chinaman, and cause him to turn away from what is written as the production of an uneducated person.

Writing to Dr. Mullens in 1875 with reference to the results of the examination of a young missionary in the language, Mr. John expresses regret that he had spent so much time as he appeared to have spent in trying to write Chinese, and he says:—

'The ability to *write* the character is by no means essential to thorough efficiency in speaking and reading, whilst these two are the only branches which a foreigner can ever hope to master. Chinese *composition* appears to be beyond our reach. I have never seen a production by a foreigner which in a literary point of view did not excite the ridicule of an ordinary native scholar. The consequence is that most of the missionaries leave the writing to the Chinese pundits, whilst they concentrate their energies on the more feasible and vastly more important accomplishments of reading and speaking with ease, accuracy, and fulness. When they want to publish, they convey to the pundit the substance *viva voce*, which he puts into good, idiomatic Chinese. Though the missionary may not be able to *compose* himself, he ought to be able to form a critical judgment on the composition of his pundit. This power is acquired in course of time in connection with extensive reading, and it is all that is necessary in order to turn out productions of incomparably greater value than the missionary can ever hope to turn out by his own unaided ability.'

The formation of the Hankow Tract Society in 1876 marked the beginning of a new stage in Mr. John's Christian activities, the importance of which was not dreamed of at the time. He had written tracts and booklets already, but the rapid development of the new Society furnished alike fresh channels for distribution and greater demands for books.

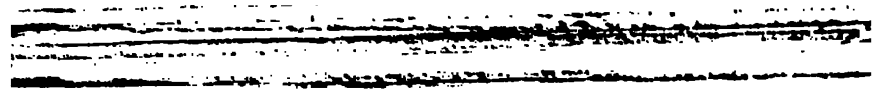
The Society was formed by the missionaries in Hankow on a modest capital of £50 granted by the





GRIFFITH JOHN AND HIS PUNDIT.

GRIFFITH JOHN IN HIS STUDY.



Religious Tract Society. One of its founders and first Secretary says that for some time its whole stock-in-trade was stored in a bedroom in his house! 'At first no more was expected from it than that by its aid its members would be enabled to circulate tracts without personal pecuniary loss.' 'The supply soon gave rise to a greater demand than had ever been anticipated, while the number of new tracts which the Committee in time added to the Society's catalogue found acceptance wherever they became known, and orders for them were sent in from all parts of China, notwithstanding the fact that non-members had to pay full price.'

In eight years the operations of the Society had become so widely extended that its name was changed to the 'Central China Religious Tract Society,' and a dépôt specially devoted to it was opened in Hankow. The report of that year (1884) mentions that the circulation of tracts and books had grown from 9000 in 1876 to 340,000 in 1883. The report for 1904 is able to state that during 1903 'the circulation had reached the record figure of 2,171,655 publications.' A colportage branch is now in operation, and, during 1903, 70 colporteurs were employed in Hupeh and Hunan, who sold 328,766 books and tracts.

Not only has Griffith John been the President of the Society almost without break from the outset, but to him more than to any other it owes the literature for which it has now so large a demand. In the report for 1884 already quoted there is a list of 50 new publications which had been issued, and of these 31

were written by Mr. John. Since then his busy pen has seldom rested, and he has enriched the Christian Church in China with a very large amount of most popular and valuable Christian literature, which has found its way wherever Chinese are to be found. Dr. Hudson Taylor told the Committee of the National Bible Society of Scotland in 1884 that Mr. John was 'the author of most of the Hankow series of tracts, which in the judgment of many of us were far and away the best prepared and best adapted Christian tracts we had ever had in China.'

Mr. Hoste, the successor of Dr. Hudson Taylor as the Director of the China Inland Mission, wrote quite recently :—

'It will not be out of place, however, for me to refer to his work, both as a translator of the Scriptures, and as an author of a large number of books and tracts setting forth the truths and doctrines of the Christian faith. These latter works are used universally by the missionaries of the China Inland Mission in our stations throughout the interior, and it is found by all workers of competent experience that they form a Christian literature of unique value, both for circulation amongst the more thoughtful Chinese outside the Church, and for the use and instruction of Church members and inquirers. Many years of experience in a district where there was a large Church impressed upon me the great value of Dr. John's tracts as a means of instructing converts and inquirers in the leading doctrines of Christianity. As is well known, he has written a series of small booklets, expounding, with



much clearness, the great fundamental truths of our holy religion, such as *The Need of Repentance*, *The Doctrine of the New Birth*, *The Forgiveness of Sins*, *The Doctrine of the Resurrection*, and so on. It is no exaggeration to say that this particular branch of Dr. John's work has provided China with a clear, concise statement of sound, evangelical doctrine, the value of which cannot be over-estimated.'

The Rev. Gilbert Y. Warren, the Chairman of the Wesleyan Missionary Society Central China Mission, whose remarks on Dr. John's gifts as a preacher have already been quoted, furnishes similar testimony to the value of Dr. John's literary work. He says:—

'Had Dr. John himself never written a tract, the Central China Religious Tract Society might legitimately claim that his influence had been a prominent factor in its work and success, for preaching and tract-selling are close allies. But Dr. John's influence on the Tract Society has been by no means merely an indirect influence. His name occurs in the Tract Society's lists of authors more frequently than any other writer's. Nor is it enough merely to mention the number of his writings; their value, judged by the supreme test, stands unrivalled. In trying to recall the books which young converts have specially mentioned as helpful to them, I know none more frequently mentioned than the *Gate of Wisdom and Virtue*, the *Catechism of Christian Doctrine*, and the *Great Themes of the Gospel*, all from Dr. John's pen.'

Applications for the supply of large quantities of these tracts and books constantly reach the Tract

Society's dépôt in Hankow from all parts of the mission-field in China, from Korea, Jamaica, the United States, Australia, and in fact from every part of the world where Chinamen are to be found in any numbers.

One specially interesting direction in which this Christian literature has been largely distributed has been among the students who gather from time to time in various provincial centres in China for examination for the various literary degrees. Wuchang is one of these centres to which men come every three years from all parts to sit for what is equivalent to an M.A. degree. From 10,000 to 20,000 students assemble on such occasions, and, though many of them are hostile or entirely indifferent, many have been found very willing to receive Christian books. Mr. John prepared a statement of Christian doctrine for the benefit of those who assembled in 1879, when 10,000 copies were distributed among them. The booklet proved very generally acceptable, and has had an exceptionally large circulation. Shortly after his return from his second visit to England, when the unexpected return of Mrs. John's malady had rendered it necessary for her again to leave China for advice and help, he wrote to Mr. Jacob:—

'HANKOW, *October* 3, 1882.

'I am working as hard as I can, and in this way trying to forget my grief as much as possible. Besides other work, in the shape of daily preaching, teaching, and looking after the Church, I have written six tracts since my return. The last, finished to-day, is quite a

long one, and I believe will make one of the *two* best I have ever composed. In it I describe my ideal Christian in his own life, and efforts to save his family, relations, and friends. It is a sort of a novel, specially adapted to the Chinese. I feel that I can ask the Master's blessing on it. Oh that I could write a book that could touch the heart of this people. I thank God for what He has enabled me to accomplish in this respect. About three years since, I prepared a book for the scholars, called *The Gate of Virtue and Wisdom*. Ten thousand copies were distributed at the examinations of that year. Tens of thousands of copies of it have been distributed in the various provinces since by missionaries of various Societies and nationalities. This year the missionaries of the Che-Kiang province have ordered 10,000 copies for scholars of that province who are attending the examinations at the provincial capital this year. It is a good tract; but I am not so satisfied with it, being very far behind my ideal. I want to get out a few that will live in this land when I am gone, and speak when my tongue lies silent in the grave. Then I feel that if I am to do much more for China I must do it quickly. A few more years and all will be over. This thought comes over me often, and sometimes with overwhelming solemnity.'

The reverence of the Chinese for the printed page; the large proportion of the male population who can read a little; the remarkable fact that the printed character is the same and has the same meaning all

over the vast area of the Empire, notwithstanding all dialectic variations of the common speech; and the well-known curiosity of the people to hear and read any new thing, give an importance to the diffusion of Christian literature unequalled in any other part of the world. Some years after the letter just quoted, Dr. John, relating some of the results of his work in Hankow and the surrounding districts, said:—

'It was delightful to make the discovery day after day that the Gospel was becoming rapidly and widely known all over the country. This is to be ascribed in a measure to the daily public preaching, and in a measure to the extensive distribution of books and tracts. We sent out from Hankow last year more than 300,000 tracts and more than 190,000 portions of Scripture. What an army of preachers and teachers! Our books and tracts find their way into every province in China, and are read extensively by all classes of the people. They find their way also into the Straits, into Australia, and even into the United States of America. Much of this seed is doubtless lost, but, thank God, not a little of it has fallen into good soil, and is bringing forth fruit. Many facts came before us last year which fully justify us in this hope. One of the most satisfactory converts we have is a man who was brought to the knowledge of the truth by reading our books. He was one day at one of our chapels listening to the preaching. At the close of my discourse I began to catechise my hearers. This man answered every question put. I asked him where he had got his knowledge from. He replied that he had been

reading such and such books, and that he was indebted to them for all his knowledge of the doctrine. Then I catechised him on the books, and found that he had read them carefully. I exhorted him to give his heart to God, and make a profession of his faith in Christ. He said he would, and promised to attend the services. He began on the following Sunday, was baptized after a period of probation, and became a most earnest Christian. He has passed through the fires of persecution, and has had to flee from his home more than once. The members of his clan have been wanting to cut him off on account of his religion; but his aged mother's intercessions on his behalf have prevailed so far. "Why," said she, "do you want to deprive me of my child? He is my only son, and, as you know, he is one of the best of sons. The only fault you can find with him is that he is Christian. Spare him for my sake." He is a Hunan man, and in no province is the anti-foreign feeling so strong as it is there. He, however, has been kept by the power of God, and is growing in grace and knowledge.'

In addition to the presidency of the Hankow Tract Society, Mr. John in 1878 agreed to the request of the National Bible Society of Scotland that he would exercise a general supervision of the work of the representative they had just sent out to Central China. He occupied this position for two years, and then withdrew from it as no longer necessary, but has continued ever since in close association with the Society as one of its most active and valued helpers.

The National Bible Society of Scotland has taken

in China a different position from the British and Foreign Bible Society on the question of notes and explanations. The great English Society has resolutely in every version adhered to its rule that the Scriptures are to be circulated 'without note or comment,' while the Scottish Society has given a somewhat larger liberty to those who have to provide the Scriptures for non-Christian peoples, and has sanctioned in Central China the provision of explanatory notes and of an annotated paragraph Bible.

Mr. John Archibald, the young representative whom the National Bible Society entrusted to Mr. John's sympathy and control in 1878, still occupies his important post, and has maintained throughout his whole course an intimate and affectionate friendship with Mr. John. One missionary neighbour, the Secretary of the Central China Religious Tract Society, has already furnished a sketch of Mr. John as the preacher; it will be interesting to have a companion picture from Mr. Archibald of Mr. John as colporteur:—

'Dr. John was in the country when I arrived—at Hiau-Kan, I think,—and the first time I met him was in the porch of St. John's Church, where he was taking the forenoon English service. At first sight he struck me as a man the like of whom one does not meet with every day. Under the average height, but strongly built and muscular; a massive head well set on powerful neck; features prominent, but regular and pleasing; a flashing eye and a wealth of jet-black hair—he looked the very personification of ability and energy.

The sermon he delivered that morning to barely a baker's dozen of Europeans would have crowded the largest church in London.

'At the request of my Directors, Dr. John kindly agreed to superintend, an official relation which he held for two years, when, with equal kindness, he wrote the Directors saying they might have confidence in leaving everything to myself. To the young missionary it makes all the difference in the world into whose hands he falls at the start, and I was fortunate indeed in having Dr. John to look after me.

'With regard to Bible work, Dr. John held that the wide circulation of the Story of the Life of Christ, as told by the Evangelists, was one of the best of plans for making the Gospel known; and, granted such writers, such a story, and a people able to read and appreciate it, who can say he was wrong? From the day of his first arrival in Shanghai he was an enthusiastic Bible-worker.

'With such a friend to encourage, I was speedily at work, travelling about in all directions circulating Scriptures and other Christian books—a lowly form of service perhaps, but one which just then conferred unique honour on the men engaged in it, viz. the honour of being the first to carry the Gospel to many great cities and populous towns. On these journeys Dr. John would sometimes come along, to my great delight. It is true he was old enough to be my father, but one never thought of years in connection with him: he was simply the best of chums.

'In December of 1879, I remember, we started

together for a tour in the provinces of Kiang-Si and Hunan, which lasted five weeks. In a little native boat we crossed the Po-yang Lake, admiring the scenery of the lofty Lu Mountains, little thinking that in after years we were to be largely instrumental in having placed on the top of them one of the largest sanatoria in the East. We favoured little boats for the sake of economy, and because in these one could travel faster and get further than in a big one. Such a boat consists of a square space like a box, some eight feet by five, with a stem and a stern to it. It is covered with a mat roof, but open at both ends for the winds to whistle through. In the daytime, when it rained, we sat in the box, and at night, wrapped in our quilts, we slept on the floor. For the formation of close companionship there could be no better school.

'The good days—and most of the days were good—we spent in walking along the river banks talking to the people we met till we happened on a town. There we would remain a few hours preaching and selling books. The great aim was to get on friendly terms with the people, and to try and convey to them some idea of the Gospel message, in both of which difficult arts Dr. John was a past master. I used to say he could make a Chinaman do anything he pleased, if he set his mind on it, and he was something of the same opinion himself. One day, while resting under a shade tree in company with a pedlar of peanuts, as a challenge I asked him to get the pedlar—one of the kind who, as the Chinese say, would rather part with a drop of his heart's blood than the value of a cash—

to present us with a handful of his wares. It took him half-an-hour's eloquence, but we got the nuts; then with many expressions of gratitude and a handsome book in acknowledgment, with some more serious talk, we left him a happier and more thoughtful pedlar than he had been for many a day.

'Two incidents in that Kiang-Si trip stand prominently out in my memory. One was our visit to King-teh-tsin, in the north-east of the province. It is here the porcelain is made for which China has so long been famous. The whole town is given up to its production. It contains an immense population, and the air is thick with the smoke of its numerous furnaces. The workmen had a reputation for rowdiness, and had previously driven away a party of scientists, in spite of their special passports from Peking. They had also proved too many for another gentleman who tried to steal into the town disguised as a native. For us in our foreign dress to succeed, come, as we were, not to look quietly around, but for the purpose of preaching and selling books to as many of the people as we could reach, required very careful strategy. We therefore adopted the plan which we had learned by experience is the best under doubtful circumstances—we went straight at it, and walked right in.

'There was an uproar. The workmen buzzed out in thousands and thousands like bees from their hives. Fortunately we hit on a large space in front of the Imperial Pottery, where, standing on an elevation, all could get a look at us, while Dr. John, his voice ringing to the furthest limit, talked them into good

order. He told them who we were, and who they were who had sent us—the Christian friends of England. He explained why we had come. We wished them to know the only true God, whom their fathers had forgotten; the Supreme Ruler who made heaven and earth, and cares for men and all things. He urged them to abandon idolatry and put their trust in Jesus the Saviour of men, and said we had books to sell explaining these matters more clearly.

'The preaching and selling, once started, had to be carried on. No stopping was possible, for the news, spreading from street to street, brought ever-fresh crowds on the scene. It was just like as if, in some densely populated manufacturing city at home, the word were to go round that a couple of strange beings dropped from the moon were on exhibition in the principal square. To control a crowd like this is extremely exhausting. The eye and voice, mind and body, are strained to the utmost; a moment's inattention and they get out of hand. As there is no stopping, so there is no getting away; to attempt a retreat means bringing the whole crowd on in pursuit, whooping and yelling like mad. On this occasion night brought release, when, tired out, but happy and grateful, we found that some 5000 books had been disposed of. This was the biggest end-on sale I was ever engaged in. Once the public curiosity was satiated, we had no further difficulty in King-teh-tsin. Next day we were able to move about freely, and, in company with a friendly Hankow merchant, visited many of the pottery works, highly interested in the different processes.

'The next incident was at Nanchang, the capital of the province. It is a fine city on the right bank of the Kan, a river which enters the Po-yang Lake from the south. Quite a number of missionaries had visited it previously, but none had ever been allowed to enter its gates. Its strong walls were doubly gated, and in the interval between each pair of gates was a guard of soldiers who watched closely all who came out or went in. Any foreigner trying to enter was gently but forcibly invited to drink tea in the guard-house, as the guards could not permit them to go in till they had communicated with their superiors inside. As nothing ever came of this communication, the guest would be finally dismissed with a polite request to come back another day, when the whole performance would be gone through afresh.

'On our arrival at Nanchang, the guards were as usual ready with the usual "heart comfort" ("come again to-morrow"), but Dr. John insisted that we must see the magistrates, and ultimately two of them came out to persuade us to go away. The people, they said, would never stand the presence of foreigners in their city; we must pass on now, and when they (the magistrates) had properly instructed them (the people) on their duty towards strangers we might come again. Their powers of persuasion were of no mean order, but in Dr. John they met their match. The result of a long interview was that his persuasions prevailed, and the freedom of the city was conferred upon us; that is, we were allowed to enter it on the following day, permitted to go wherever we pleased, and to

preach and sell books to our heart's content. This incident put an end to all after attempts to exclude foreigners from Nanchang.

'From the capital, after visiting many cities and towns, we made our way into Hunan by the Pingshang and Liling route. Travellers will find a railway there now, but at that time it was all new ground. By day we tramped along the narrow roads, followed by a gang of coolies carrying our books and baggage, and at night we rested in the by no means luxurious local inns. In these a door propped on two stools, or a couple of tables placed together, did service for a bed while the remaining floor space accommodated the coolies, and occasionally the family pigs.

'The native inns may be noisome, but there is one good point which they have—they secure that the traveller sets out betimes in the morning, he is so thankful to escape into the pure air. One night, I remember, it was really too much for one of us, so to their surprise the coolies found themselves roused up and started off hours before daylight. They grumbled a bit, but soon regained their good-humour; they ever excused our unreasonable behaviour when one of them remembered that "these beyond-the-ocean men cannot of course know that the sun does not rise in our Kiang-Si at the same time as in their honourable country."

'On crossing the border into Hunan we hit upon—what is very rare in China—a piece of good road. By the side of the road were rows of wheelbarrows waiting for hire. Just then it came to our mind that

Confucius on state occasions rode in a chariot, so we felt it fitting in this instance that we should follow his august example. We therefore mounted a wheel-barrow each, and were merrily trundled into the city of Siling. Here we took another open-ended boat, and pushed on for Siang-tan, the largest commercial centre in Hunan. It is on the left bank of the Siang River, thirty miles above Chang-sha, the capital. On the way we met with a blizzard, and enjoyed the novel experience of sleeping under snow-covered quilts, as the wind blew the snow in in shovelfuls.

'I had been to Siang-tan before, and had left it somewhat hurriedly while the chief magistrate was having his head bound up—which had been broken by the mob, instead of mine—and his runners were collecting the fragments of his official chair. I was, therefore, somewhat diffident about venturing on its streets again. Not so Dr. John. No sooner did the prow of the boat touch the landing than he was off up the nearest street, with me after him. The crowd collected with its usual rapidity, and Dr. John began to preach with more than his usual persuasiveness, but all in vain. The Siang-tan crowd of those days had no ear for eloquence, so we were soon on board the boat again. The officials came to our rescue. They were deeply grieved we had been annoyed, and would at once provide a strong military escort to overawe the unruly. Meanwhile they moved us down to where a fleet of war junks was anchored, and began to make arrangements for our safety! As the promised escort was being mustered, a great smoke

rose from the shore right in front, and the fire-gongs clanged all over the city. In a few moments thousands of people collected, who at once began to stone us, our protectors apparently unable to prevent them. For safety's sake we moved our boat out of range and anchored in mid-stream, when a worse thing happened. A loud shouting up the river claimed our attention, and there we saw bearing down upon us a number of huge ferry-boats filled with buckets of filth and crowded with men waving long-handled ladles. On they came, yelling and waving. Their intention was plain enough. Had it been a case of any of the orthodox forms of martyrdom —the sword or the stake—I believe we might have faced it, but to be smothered in filth of such a kind that I may not describe it was too much. I sprang to the anchor chain, Dr. John lent a hand in raising the sail, and in a moment we were off as fast as the wind could take us. There are three Missions at work in Siang-tan now, and a London Mission chapel close to the spot where they stoned us. We stopped at Chang-sha in passing, and had an interview with the officials, who gave us much "heart comfort" with respect to another day, but just then strongly advised us to pass on, and we took their advice. The promised other day, when the gates of Chang-sha would be open to the missionary, did come round at last, but it was seventeen years after.'

CHAPTER XIV

HIAU-KAN

IF the Church of Christ is really beginning to feel restive and impatient on account of the ever-increasing demands made by the advocates of missions on its purse and its energy, it ought to be careful what manner of men it sends out to the mission-field. Such men as Griffith John are the despair of Generals who want the army of Christ to march as if on parade! He believes he has gone to China, not as a toy soldier, but in deadly earnest to fight the foes of God and man, and to win the kingdoms of human life for Christ. In this war he knows no truce and no rest. He must press the enemy at every point and by all means. His correspondence with the London Missionary Society during these years is full of evidence of the earnestness and persistency of his effort to extend the kingdom of Christ in China. Sze-Chuen had already been suggested to the Directors as a suitable field for occupation. In March 1877 a long statement was prepared by him and endorsed by his colleagues, making a definite proposal on this subject, and giving a detailed account of the size and vast population of the province. Its special difficulties and its special

importance were pointed out, and the conditions under which work should be commenced were stated.

In June 1878 he wrote:—'Let me once more entreat you to send us two men for Sze-Chuen such as I have already described in my former communications, and God will bless you and the Mission. I feel I could make almost any sacrifice in order to carry out the Sze-Chuen scheme.'

In August 1878 he refers to the news that Mr. Owen has been appointed to commence the work in Sze-Chuen. He rejoices in this; but one is not enough. 'Two at least ought to be sent out at the same time. In fact I should like to see four men appointed to Sze-Chuen, two for the Chinese, and two for the Miautse and aborigines of the west part of the province.'

In August 1879, there being temporary need of help in Hankow, because Mr. Bryant and possibly Mr. Bryson would shortly be leaving on furlough, he asks that Mr. Owen may remain in Hankow during the absence of one or both, especially as it does not seem right that one man should go to Sze-Chuen alone, but goes on to say that when the time comes for commencing the new mission, Mrs. John and he will be quite prepared to go to Chung-king for a while, though it may involve the postponement of their furlough.

The Society was at this time passing through one of those periods of financial difficulty which recur in the experience of all Missionary Societies from time to time, because the Church at home finds it so difficult

to rearrange its conceptions of what the work needs fast enough to keep pace with its growth. So acute was the difficulty that the grants made to the missions for carrying on their evangelistic work had been reduced. Consequently the Directors had not felt able to take any further step towards extension to Sze-Chuen. The pertinacious missionary, however, did not feel he could let the matter rest. Having waited some time, he wrote from New York in 1881 :—

'Is it not time to carry out the promise of four years since? We have talked about the matter for years, and I do trust that we shall now act with energy and promptitude.'

While he was looking out upon the distant province of Sze-Chuen with the eager eye of the Christian pioneer, he was also devising plans for the more effective occupation and evangelisation of the province of Hupeh. In 1877 he sent to the Directors of his Society a long letter containing a carefully worked-out proposal for the employment of a band of European evangelists, who should come out to the field unmarried, and should agree to remain unmarried for a certain number of years. They were to be men of a plainer type, without college training, but truly converted and consecrated men, instructed in the Scriptures and the broad outlines of Christian doctrine. They were not to live at the central stations, which were to be occupied by a couple of fully trained married missionaries, but were to live in the country in Chinese houses, and were to form a kind of auxiliary evangelistic force. Such men would have to work under the direction and

leadership of some experienced superintendent, and he offered to devote himself to this work. He proposed that an effort should be made by this means to reach the rural population of the two provinces of Hupeh and Kiang-Su. To Mr. John's great disappointment, the Directors of the Society were unable to adopt his scheme, and after a time he was led to change his opinion on the subject, and came to the conclusion that it would not be wise to introduce two classes of missionaries to the field.

Meanwhile, the spirit of evangelism which Mr. John had done so much to cultivate in the native church at Hankow was being manifested in many directions. 'The disciples went everywhere preaching the Word.' The result was twofold. In the first place the number of converts largely increased, and little groups of Christians were gathered in many places throughout a wide area. The natural result of this was that after a time it became absolutely necessary to open additional central stations with European missionaries, in order that this widespread work might become consolidated and still further developed. It is thus that the responsibilities of Missionary Societies are increased in all prosperous missions by the natural and irrepressible process of expansion. Two such fully equipped new central stations in the province of Hupeh, in addition to Wuchang, have already sprung out of the Mission at Hankow, and a third centre has for some time been chosen and is about to be occupied by two missionaries. The earliest of these new centres to be occupied, and the district in which the work has

been most fully developed, is Hiau-Kan, and the story of its beginning and growth is one of intense interest.

In 1874 a man named Wei Teh-Yung was received into the Church at Hankow. He was not a resident in the city, but was a small farmer and packman whose home was in a village about forty miles away, and whose business brought him frequently to the city. Curiosity took him into the Kia-Kiai Chapel one wet day when Dr. John was preaching to an audience of six persons! He listened that he might learn what this 'foreign doctrine' was, and the Spirit of God spoke to him there and revealed Christ to him as his Saviour. He took the Gospel home with him, and at once began to tell his relatives and his clansmen the glad tidings he had heard. God blessed his faithful witness, and in the course of a few months about twenty had joined him. Mr. Wei was a good representative of that interesting class which has already been referred to, who are the hope of the Church in China, and whose character is an indication of the intelligence, strength, and spiritual enthusiasm which will be found among Chinese Christians.

In his report on the work of the Mission during the year 1875, Dr. John referred to Mr. Wei and his earnest efforts for the salvation of his neighbours in the following terms :—

'Among the many interesting features connected with these new converts, the fact that one of our private members has been the principal agent in the conversion of thirteen of the most satisfactory of them stands first and foremost. This man's name is Wei, and he is a

native of a district called Hiau-Kan, about forty miles from Hankow. He and most of his friends are but farmers and packmen, and spend their time partly in cultivating the fields, and partly in selling cloth in the streets of Hankow. Wei, though not a graduate or even an undergraduate in the Confucian School, is by no means ignorant of the Confucian classics, and will often quote them in a way that indicates on his part a more thorough appreciation of their meaning than is evinced by many of the so-called scholars. Wei is a plain, honest, straightforward-looking man, and naturally endowed with a considerable amount of sound common sense and force of character. After a short period of probation he was baptized in May 1874, and he has proved himself an Israelite indeed ever since.

'No sooner did he become a Christian than he felt that he must be a living, working Christian. He began at once to teach and exhort others; but the fruits of his efforts did not appear till the commencement of last year. All through the year, however, we were constantly reminded of his presence amongst us as a great power for good, and were cheered by unquestionable proofs of his devotion to Christ. It appeared to be his aim to get hold of all his Hiau-Kan acquaintances whenever they visited Hankow, and bring them to me. Often has he filled my study with his friends, and often has my heart been cheered by the Christian intelligence, warmth of feeling, and earnestness of manner which he displays whenever he speaks. He is a thorough believer in the Holy Ghost, and never fails to dwell especially on the importance of prayer for the divine

influence in order to illumine the mind and change the heart. Pointing to one, he will say: "This friend has heard the truth repeatedly and knows it intellectually; but he does not understand it—it has no meaning to him. He has not received the Holy Ghost." Pointing to another, he will remark: "This brother (thank God) has received the Holy Ghost at last. I have been at him for a long time, but he could not see it. I could do nothing for him but pray. It is all clear to him now. The Holy Ghost has revealed it to him." Thirteen of our converts have been brought to Christ by means of his prayerful efforts.'

The report for the following year tells of the call of Mr. Wei by the church to the work of an evangelist in his native district.

'It will be remembered that the work in these villages is not the outcome of any direct effort put forth by missionaries and paid native agents, with a view to their evangelisation. All the Christians in Hiau-Kan have been baptized at Hankow, and Wei, a non-paid convert, has been the chief agent in their ingathering. I am glad, however, to be able to add that this earnest worker has just been set apart by the native church of Hankow for the specific work of an evangelist in Hiau-Kan, his native district. He is not to settle down anywhere, but to keep travelling over the whole district, spending a night here and two or three nights there as opportunities present themselves, and thus to carry the Gospel into the homes of the people as noiselessly and unostentatiously as possible. He has the full confidence of the entire church, and will be

supported wholly by it. I have strong faith in the man as a thoroughly sincere and earnest Christian. Time alone can prove his fitness for this special work. He assures me that he has laid himself on the altar, and has but one desire now, and that is to glorify God in bringing men to the Saviour. May God's richest blessing rest upon Wei and his labours; and may he be only the first of a large band of evangelists sent forth by the native churches in Hankow and Wuchang to all the surrounding districts of the province.'

It has been the habit of Dr. John from the earliest days of the Hankow Mission to make frequent short itinerating trips in the country round Hankow for the purpose of visiting and confirming the converts, and these visits have been used as opportunities of evangelisation along the route. In accordance with this practice he promised Mr. Wei that he would pay a visit to his village during the Chinese New Year holidays of 1876, when every one would be at home and free to listen to the preaching. At the New Year's morning service in Hankow, to their great surprise, Mr. Wei appeared and informed them that his heathen clansmen had been stirred up to violent opposition to the Gospel, and that while he and some of his friends were holding a service, the house in which they were assembled had been attacked and pulled down, the furniture had been broken, and he had himself been beaten. He thought, however, that the proposed visit would do good in arousing interest and disarming hostility. The next afternoon the party started. Dr. John had invited his ardent young colleague, Dr.

Kenneth Mackenzie, to accompany him. They took with them Siau, the hospital evangelist, another Christian named Chia, and Mr. Wei and his brother. A walk of ten miles across the muddy plain brought them to a point on the Han where they hired a small boat, into which they squeezed themselves with their baggage, and travelled up the river through the night. At 9 A.M. on Tuesday they landed, and walked across country. No European had ever been seen in those parts before, so they were surrounded and followed from the first by a crowd of people who gathered from the fields and hamlets as they went along, curious to see the foreigners. What happened thereafter is narrated by Mr. John in very sober terms in a letter to Dr. Mullens. Dr. Mackenzie gave his friends a far more full and graphic account of their experiences. It is evident that for a time they were in great peril of their lives, and that one hasty act on their part or on the part of their native friends might have been the means of precipitating an attack which would have had fatal consequences.

'On the 31st January, Dr. Mackenzie and myself left Hankow with the view of visiting the converts in those parts, and doing all in our power on the way by means of teaching and healing. Everything went well with us till we came within a mile or two of the Wei village. That part of the country having never been visited by a foreigner before, we had to encounter along the whole journey the usual excitement connected with the missionary's first visit to a place, and for this we were quite prepared. But the villagers, so far from

attempting to injure us, seemed glad to see us. In some instances we were received very kindly. Often were we pressed to stop and preach, and supplied with benches and tea. When, however, we came to a group of villages distant from the Wei village about two miles, the whole aspect of things changed, and we soon found ourselves exposed to an attack, the violence of which surpassed anything I had ever witnessed in China, though I have lived in the country twenty years and travelled over large portions of nine provinces.

'It became evident at once that the people of these villages had combined to assault us in order to make it impossible for foreigners to visit their part of the country again. I tried to remonstrate with them in a way that I have often done in similar circumstances with perfect success; but it was worse than useless in this case. Remonstrance only intensified their rage. They commenced with hooting and yelling; but they soon proceeded to pelt us with lumps of hard clay. Fortunately for us there were no stones lying about. Dr. Mackenzie, though not wounded, was struck scores of times. I received two cuts, one on the face and one on the head. The general cries were, "Beat the foreigners—Kill the foreigners—Back with them to Hankow—Let them go and preach in Hankow—We won't have them come here and preach." One man had a large club in his hand; another had a rapier; and many looked like very fiends.

'About a mile on this side of the Wei village, there is a creek which had to be crossed ere we could reach

our destination. When we came to this spot there must have been a thousand people at least gathered on the banks. The villagers on this side wanted to drive us over the creek, and those on the other side threatened to kill us if we came within their reach. We ventured to attempt it; but the moment I set my foot on the bridge I was saluted with a perfect shower of hard lumps of mud. We made our way back from this dangerous position as soon as possible; and though an attempt was made to force us on, we succeeded in regaining the bank.

'From what I have heard since, as well as what I saw at the time, I feel convinced that if we had not retreated we should have been murdered. Seeing that to proceed was simply impossible, I asked the permission of the mob to return to Hankow, and, to my astonishment, obtained it. Having walked about two miles in a different direction from the one we came, one of our native companions remembered that one of our converts was living in a village hard by. We sent him on to see if he could find him, and to ask the villagers if they would receive us for the night. It was now quite dark, and we were in a hostile country. In about half-an-hour our friend reappeared, bringing the convert with him. I asked the latter if he was not afraid to receive us. His reply was: "No, not in the least. We will receive you and protect you." As we entered the village we met his brother, who, though not a convert, is not wholly ignorant of the truth. He also gave us a hearty welcome.

'On Wednesday morning, having done some work

in the way of preaching and healing, we started for Hankow, which place we reached about 8 P.M.

'The conduct of the converts and of many of their friends exceeded my most sanguine expectations. When they were informed of our difficulties, they hastened to our rescue, identified themselves with us, and did all in their power to protect us. One of our friends insisted upon walking side by side with me in order to shield me from harm. This noble act exposed him to many a hard blow; but he bore it all bravely and cheerfully. Another of our converts in the very height of the storm begged the mob to kill him, but spare the pastor. I was struck with the calmness and forgiving spirit displayed by these men. During the attack, they maintained the utmost self-possession; and when it was over they never breathed an angry word. When lodged safely in the village, I asked them how they felt. Their reply was: "Never better. Our hearts are full of peace and joy. God has greatly honoured us in thus permitting us to suffer for His name and cause." "Have you any revengeful feeling?" I asked them again. "No," was the reply, "not the least. We only desire their salvation, and believe that God intends this to be the beginning of a great work in the district of Hiau-Kan.'

On his return to Hankow, Dr. John promptly laid a statement of the case before H.M. Consul, and he in turn addressed himself to the Chinese authorities, complaining of this unwarrantable attack on British subjects who were entirely within their treaty rights in travelling as they had done. The effect of this official remon-

strance was thoroughly satisfactory. Mr. John was invited to visit the place again, and did so after an interval of a few months. In June of the same year he wrote to Mr. Jacob:—

'I never felt more calm in my life than I did in that storm. The Saviour was felt specially near as my strength and comforter. For about five minutes it appeared as if I were going to die, and yet the prospect did not disturb my peace in the least. When it was all over I felt thankful that I had been permitted to shed my blood in the cause of Christ. I had laboured many years for Him, but never before had I been called to lose a drop of blood for Him. The thought brought real sweetness to my soul. Everything has been going on very quietly since in that region. I visited it again, called at all the villages, and preached the Gospel fully and freely. I was very cordially received everywhere. In some of the villages platforms were erected for me to preach on, and hundreds came to hear what I had to say about these things. A good work has been begun there, and the prospects are bright.'

From this time onward the spread of Christianity in the whole district has been remarkable. In the report for 1878 Mr. John tells of a visit paid in 1877:—

'Having reached the farthest village, and preached there to large and attentive audiences, we returned to the Wei village. We were tired and hungry, and I had been unfortunate enough to sprain my ankle early in the morning. We greatly needed an hour's rest, and made an effort to obtain it. But there was no

rest for us till midnight. No sooner had we finished our evening meal than the house was besieged by visitors from the surrounding villages, who declared that they must see and hear the foreigners before they would return; so I was compelled to go out and preach to them. Standing under a large tree, with the moon shining brightly on the scene, I preached with all my might to a large and interested congregation. Whether any of them were savingly impressed, I know not; but preaching has never been a greater joy to me than it was on that occasion. As soon as the crowd dispersed we had a service with the converts, at which not a few of the heathen of the village were present. Several were impressed. Teh-kwei was under deep conviction; and one very satisfactory candidate was baptized. A few of the Christians stayed on till midnight. Teh-kwei felt that he could not leave, and before we parted he declared his resolution to make a public profession of his faith in Christ.

'On Tuesday morning, very early, we were off for the Wei village, in which we have a few Christians. As we were passing through the Wei village, the evangelist requested me to follow him into the temple of the god of the land and grain. "Do you see," said he, "the godless condition of this temple?" I told him that I did, and asked him for an explanation. He then told me how the children of the village had taken the gods some months previously, and, having amused themselves with them awhile, pitched them into the village pond. He assured me that this was done by the children of the heathen, and that it was

their own idea. This fact, as well as many other facts which came under our observation during our sojourn at the Wei village, showed me clearly that idolatry had lost its hold on the convictions of the people. The village contains about five hundred souls, and I did not meet a man in it who seemed to have any real faith in either the idols or the idolatrous rites of the land. I do not see why it should not become a Christian village within a reasonable period.'

Again in 1879 he was able to tell of the introduction of the Gospel into another village in the neighbourhood in a very similar way:—

'You are familiar with the name Hiau-Kan, having been mentioned often in my letters. We have had a good work going on there for about two years at the Wei village. About four months since another interest sprang up quite suddenly. A man who was converted at Hankow about three years ago asked permission at the time of the flood to visit his home. When he came back he told me that many in consequence of his preaching had lost all faith in their idolatry, and some had thrown their idols into the flood. I hastened to the place, and found the state of things to be just as he had represented them. Many seemed to have given up their idolatry; but their knowledge of Christian truth seemed very limited. I did what I could to help them, and immediately on my return sent a native assistant to live in their midst for a month and instruct them.

'A fortnight ago I visited them again, and found that a wonderful change had taken place in the

villagers. Several had fully made up their minds to join us; a large number were halting between two opinions, and all were well disposed. The children delighted me much. The fundamental truths of the Gospel seemed to have taken a hold of their minds, and they could answer any question I might put to them. Before I left, nine whole families had joined the Church, and a large number besides had become deeply interested in the truth. I am expecting to see the whole village becoming Christian within a year or so. There are in the villages about seventy families and between three and four hundred souls. But the work is spreading into the other villages around, so we may reasonably hope to see a rich harvest in that region within a reasonable period. May God grant it.'

Thus the gracious influence spread from village to village, and has continued to spread ever since. Soon the people of Wei-kia-wan needed a place of worship, and the spirit of self-help and of brotherly love and sympathy were called out by the need. In 1880 they appealed to Mr. John for advice, and he took at once the very sound position that they must help themselves.

It is easy to be wise after the event, and in the light of the experience which has now been gained in every part of the mission-field to urge the importance of insisting upon self-help in chapel-building and maintenance of the ministry. Perhaps if missionaries had always been firm in carrying out this rule, there would not have been so much of that spirit of dependence on European help which is so serious a cause of anxiety for the future of the Church in some parts

of the field. Yet it is not surprising that in the earlier days of the Missions such mistakes should have been made. When Christianity was still a very foreign and unfamiliar creed, and its first disciples, who are usually the poor, were surrounded by men who violently opposed and persecuted those who had changed their faith, it was not at all unnatural for the missionary to try to encourage the converts by providing shelter and maintenance when necessary, and by relieving them of as many burdens as possible. Such help, however, though occasionally necessary, is very apt to become pauperising. Mr. John took in this case what results have proved to be the wiser course. He declined to lay the burden of building chapels on the Missionary Society, though as a personal, sympathetic friend and member of the Hankow church he contributed privately. In his report of work done during 1880 he wrote:—

'The spirit of Christian giving has received a real impulse in our little church this year. The last time I visited Hiau-Kan the matter of chapel-building came up before us. The converts were told that the Society could not undertake to provide them with chapels, and that it was the plain duty of the Chinese Christians to undertake the entire responsibility of providing themselves with accommodation. I promised, however, that, if they would furnish ground and contribute according to their means towards the buildings, I would bring the matter before their brethren at Hankow and try and get them to help. Two pieces of land, valued at about 100 dollars, were offered at once, a

subscription list was opened, and promises were made by the Hiau-Kan converts which reflected considerable credit on their zeal and liberality. I brought the matter before the native church at Hankow, and was greatly delighted by the way it was taken up. Everybody seemed charmed with the idea: some gave well, the poorest gave something, the widow threw in her mite, and all gave cheerfully. The consequence is, that two little sanctuaries, with a prophet's room attached to each, are being built in Hiau-Kan by the natives themselves, the missionaries helping only as members of the church, according to their private means.

'This is the first time that this has been done in these parts, and, so far as our Mission is concerned, it is likely to be taken as a precedent by the converts. The contributions of the native church this year will be over 300 dollars, or about three times as much as they have contributed in any one previous year. The Chinese are a money-loving people. Their principal divinity is the god of riches, and their one aim is the acquisition of pelf. When the converts begin to give of their money, it may be taken for granted that they have given their hearts.'

What was meant by self-help in this case is described by the Rev. W. Owen, who visited the Wei village at the beginning of 1881:—

'On my arrival at the Wei village, I found almost every Christian in the place fully and freely engaged in helping the masons and carpenters to put up the first place of worship to the true and living God in the

whole of that region. I stayed there five days, and happier five days I never spent at any place in my life. I was perfectly delighted with the spirit which was manifested, and the energy put forth by our brethren when building this house of prayer. No one had any difficulty in seeing that the people had a mind to work, and no one did more than, and rejoiced so much in the idea of having a chapel in the place as Mr. Wei, our native brother and preacher. I have been told that for about a fortnight, when the chapel was building, this good, earnest, and warm-hearted Christian hardly closed his eyes. During the day he was engaged in helping the men, and during the night he kept watching lest any one should come and steal or destroy some of the materials. The Wei-kia-wan chapel stands on a slight elevation, and can be seen for miles almost in every direction; a more delightful spot for the chapel could not have been fixed upon in the whole place.

'During my stay with them we had services every evening in Mr. Wei's house, and certainly it was a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The joy of the Israelites when returning from captivity could not have been much greater than that of our brethren at the Wei village at this time; their mouths were filled with laughter and their tongues with singing, and their daily language was, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."'

Shortly after, Mr. John was able with joy to write:—

'One of the last things I did before leaving was to open our new chapel at the Wei village in Hiau-Kan. This little sanctuary is the first that has ever been

erected in Central China by the converts themselves. It is a pretty little building, beautifully situated on a low hill, and seen miles all around. The converts are delighted with it, and the heathen seemed pleased. On Sunday week we had a church meeting in the morning, when four deacons were elected; in the afternoon Mr. Bryson and myself preached; and in the evening we had a delightful prayer-meeting, in which several of the converts spoke with much earnestness and warmth. Between forty and fifty partook of the communion, and among them there were eleven or twelve women. Five adults and eleven children were baptized. I left the Wei village feeling that a good, solid foundation has been laid there, and that the work cannot but prosper in that region. The chapel at the Liu village is going up, and will be ready in a month or so.'

It is not necessary to tell the rest of the Hiau-Kan story at any length. The reports and letters from that time onward contain frequent references to the district, and all of them have been encouraging. In 1880 premises were secured in the prefectural city, and, though it was not safe at that time nor for some years after for a European to reside there, a native evangelist could do so, and Europeans could visit the place without difficulty or disturbance.

The city of Hiau-Kan has a population of 20,000, and has jurisdiction over the district comprised by a plain about one hundred miles long by twenty miles broad, densely populated by a vigorous, agricultural people. The desirability of occupying the place

permanently as a new station as soon as it was safe to do so became increasingly apparent as the work in the district prospered. It was, however, thirteen years later before the Society was able to make the move. In 1893 the place was occupied by two European missionaries. At that time there were church members in eighteen villages, while the truth was penetrating into scores of other places.

At the end of 1897, after one of his periodical itinerating tours, Dr. John wrote :—

'I was very much struck this time with the marvellous way the work is spreading over the whole of the Hiau-Kan district, and that chiefly through the instrumentality of the converts ; nearly all the candidates for baptism I examined had obtained their knowledge of the truth from private members. The few native paid agents in Hiau-Kan are working hard, and rendering admirable service. But it would have been impossible for them to instruct all the men who came before me as candidates. One of the men baptized by me at the beginning of the year must have spent a great deal of his time in teaching others, for his name was often mentioned by the candidates as their instructor.

'We have converts now in all parts of the district, and their number is multiplying rapidly. People are pressing in from every quarter. It looks as if the whole of Hiau-Kan might be evangelised within the next two or three decades.'

Recently a large slice of the farther end of the district has been cut off and connected with a new

station at Tsao Shih, yet there are now upwards of 2400 members in Christian fellowship in connection with the Hiau-Kan Mission, while a most gracious and successful ministry of healing is being carried on in the mission hospital and the leper asylum, which have been established in connection with the Mission in the prefectural city.



CHAPTER XV

HOME AGAIN

ONLY once since 1873 has the face of Griffith John been seen among his friends in Britain. He has been urged to come home by the Directors of the Society on more than one occasion. He has been elected to the Chair of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. He has actually agreed to come more than once, but circumstances and his strong sense of duty have hindered him. The struggle in his mind between the claims of his family and his duty to the Mission, which has already been noticed, sometimes found very strong and pathetic expression in his correspondence. His two sons were growing up to manhood; in fact, the elder of them was already being trained for his profession, and the second was at that critical stage when wise advice and help were needed to help him to decide for the future. His daughter, too, was growing up, and her education and development in character were naturally a subject of much concern. So he writes in 1878:—

'Would I could come home and see you all once more. Home, sweet home! But how can I leave my work? I long to see the children. I feel it to be

a duty to look after their interests. But here I am in the midst of work, and sinking deeper and deeper into it.'

Again in 1879:—

'I have received a letter from Griffith, David, and Mary to-day, and the burden of the whole is "Come home." My dear friend, my mind is much burdened and saddened as I write this. The impulse of the heart is decidedly Wales-ward. But how can I leave my work? If I am anything at all, I am a missionary. I am a missionary, not in profession, but in heart and soul. In regard to the work, necessity is laid upon me, and woe be unto me if I forsake it. Let me leave the work, and my doom is sealed. I shall go through the rest of my days with a heavy heart and a burdened conscience. I feel the power of your appeals, and the power of my children's love, together with the claims which the dear old lady has on me and mine. But this is my life-work, the work which God has given me to do, and I feel that I cannot give it up without sinning against Him and cutting in two the line of my destiny.'

In 1880 Mrs. John had shown serious signs of ill-health, and ultimately it was felt to be advisable that she should go home to America *via* England. Most men in the present day would have felt that this, added to the call of parental affection and responsibility, would have been sufficient to justify handing over work for a time to the care of colleagues. Even this does not move the Spartan sense of duty of this true soldier of the Cross. Until it is shown to be

absolutely necessary, he cannot forsake his post, so he writes to Mr. Jacob:—

'Mrs. John has been out in China in all twenty-six years, and the only change she has had for sixteen years has been one short six months ten years since. The consequence is that her health has been running down for two or three years; her digestive organs are thoroughly out of order; and about four months since she had a severe sprain of the ankle, which has kept her in the house ever since, and given a decided impetus to the downward course of her health. I don't feel that I should be justified in consulting my own happiness and keeping her here over another summer. It will be a great trial to us both; but life is made up of trials. You will say, "Why not come home with her?" My reply is simple—"I cannot."'

Five months later the same faithful friend is told:—

'And now to the purport of your letter. You want me to come home, and that at once. In some respects I should much like to come home at this time. It would be a great joy to see you all, and I feel the claims of my children upon me. But the fact is, I *cannot* come just now. That is, I cannot come without detriment to the work here. The work is now in that state in which it requires in a special manner my presence and help. In four or five years hence I shall probably be able to leave it without much risk. I cannot explain all this to you, but if you were here for a day or two I could show it to you. As to my health, I have seldom felt better than I have been feeling of late. I am really a strong,

healthy man, and physically I can do more work than any one of the younger missionaries in the place.'

Then came the intelligence from New York by telegram that Mrs. John's illness was much more serious than had been supposed, and that a critical operation would have to be performed. This at last turned the scale, and he started at once direct for the States, yet he did it as one who even then was in a strait betwixt two. He wrote to the Mission House:—

'It is hard to break off from a work that I so much love, and leave these dear converts whom I love as my own children. Besides this, I had many cherished plans which I hoped to carry out this year. There are several little churches to be consolidated, and office-bearers to be appointed. There are signs of life in many parts. At some of the stations the zeal of the Christians seems to be breaking forth anew, and in some districts the heathen are becoming more interested in the truth. One new chapel built by the native Christians is finished, and the other is going up apace. A house is being purchased in the very city of Hiau-Kan for evangelistic purposes, but not with the Society's money. The native hospital is flourishing, but needs my presence. There is a new chapel to be erected in the city of Hankow; but I am afraid the idea will have to be laid aside during my absence. Then I had my literary work cut out. It was my intention to bring out a Life of Christ, a scientific catechism, a book on moral philosophy. All this has to be given up. It was my intention to

spend five years more in China, and then come and see you all. It is a greater trial to me to leave China at this time than I can possibly tell you.'

He was greatly shocked by the change in his wife's appearance; but after the operation she began slowly to mend, and they were comforted by the assurance that the trouble was not malignant and was not likely to return. During the slow process of Mrs. John's return to convalescence he used diligently his opportunities of seeing and hearing all he could, and spoke frequently and with great acceptance on his beloved China. He heard Moody, and was greatly impressed by him, and he kindled in the son of his host, the Rev. Ll. D. Bevan, D.D., the missionary fire which ultimately drove him to China, where he is now labouring as a missionary in Shanghai.

The following brief letters, written from New York, to his close friend and colleague, the Rev. Arnold Foster, are interesting, not only as telling something of his hopes and plans, but also as revealing something of his keen and clear discernment and power of criticism:—

'NEW YORK, *May* 24, 1881.

'MY DEAR FOSTER,—I was glad to receive your last letter from Hankow. I sympathise with you in regard to the trial of waiting. . . . I am not surprised that you have found much in —— to love and respect. There is real gold in him, and a great deal more of it than there is in many with more glitter. He is a *good* man. You will be pleased to hear that our prospects

are growing brighter every day. Mrs. John is improving rapidly and surely. We now intend to return by way of England, and shall probably leave New York in about a month from this. When we have been in England a few days we shall be able to make up our minds as to the time to start for China. I am hoping to be in China some time in the autumn. Sometimes I feel it might be my duty to go and try and rouse the Churches, but the prevailing voice is, *Go back to your work.*

'Give my love to all the native assistants and Christians, especially to Shen, Yang, and the washerman. My love to all the missionaries, and with our best love to you.—I remain, ever your affectionate friend, G. JOHN.'

To the same:—

'NEW YORK, *June* 9, 1881.

'I went to hear Talmage on Sunday morning. It was a sermon on the Revision, and his aim was to make it out to be a mutilation and a profanation. I never in my life listened to anything which pained or disappointed me more. . . . Yet he *fills* his immense tabernacle up and down.'

On July 2, Mr. and Mrs. John were able to leave for England on their way back to China. They were apparently full of hope that they would only be detained a few weeks, and be able then to hurry out as quickly as possible to Hankow. Mrs. John's improvement, however, was so slow that the stay in England was extended to several months. They did

not leave until the last day of February 1882, and reached Hankow at the end of April. The hopes that had been raised by physicians in New York and in London proved delusive, and in less than six months Mrs. John had to return to America for a further operation. Once more she recovered, and rejoined her husband in Hankow in November 1883. For two years she was permitted to live and labour in the Mission, and then, on December 29, 1885, she passed away, apparently of peritonitis, triumphing in death.

Mr. John's stay in England in 1881-82 was very brief as compared with his previous visit, but he managed to crowd into it a large amount of earnest, eloquent, and powerful advocacy of missions. Many who heard him will never forget the impression produced by his speeches. The combination of clear statement of fact, telling illustration, strong argument, and eloquent and fervent appeal revealed him as a true orator of high order. It was, however, not the oratory that affected men so much as the conviction his words carried of absolute sincerity and of whole-hearted and intense consecration to missionary work as the most urgent and the noblest service on earth.

The most memorable of these addresses was that delivered at the Jubilee meetings of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, in Manchester, in October 1881. In subject-matter it differed little from those he delivered at other meetings; but the occasion was a very special one, and his words were heard by representative Congregationalists from all parts of the world, as well as by a great concourse of people from

various parts of Great Britain. He commenced his address by speaking of the faith and courage of Robert Morrison, the father of Protestant Missions in China. He went on to say: 'The treaty of 1842 began to open the country to merchants and missionaries.' 'I mention the missionary, not because he was thought of by the plenipotentiaries of that time, but because I see in that event the finger of God, and a Divine purpose infinitely superior to that of saturating China with opium, or even British manufactures.'

The position in which the work in China was at the time he commenced his missionary labours was described as follows:—

'When I arrived in 1855 there were only five spots in the whole Empire at which the missionary could pitch his tent. The vast interior was closed against him. He might go wherever he pleased, but he must be back again within twenty-four hours. It was the last treaty of 1860 that opened China; and it is during the last ten or twenty years that our work has succeeded in that Empire at all. That treaty not only added nine new ports to the preceding five, but also threw the whole Empire open so far as the right of travelling is concerned, and, at the present time, there is only one province whose capital is closed against us—Hunan.

'Some centuries ago Xavier, the great missionary of Rome to the East, attempted to enter China, but failed; and he could only exclaim with his dying breath, "Rock, rock, when wilt thou open?" About forty years ago, God, in His mysterious providence,

smote the rock, and it trembled, and it shook, and it yawned; and a few missionaries rushed in, but were not allowed to go far. About twenty years ago God smote that rock again, and it sank and disappeared; and now we may go up into the land, every man before him, and possess it. This, I say, is God's doing, and it is marvellous in our sight. And what are the voices that we hear at this time? I do not know what voices you hear; but I do know the voices that we ought to hear. In the first place, we ought to hear that Voice from yonder Throne, high and lifted up—the voice of God ringing in all our Churches and saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and from these Churches we ought to hear 10,000 voices rising in gladsome response, saying, "Here am I; send me."'

Alluding to previous addresses in which one or two of the American speakers had been describing the extent and the future greatness of the United States, Mr. John pointed out that in China it was not a question of future population or future greatness, but of a very urgent present. He sketched the size of China, its vast population, its great civilisation, in very clear and forcible terms. This brought him to the point of his address:—

'Then there is another point which I wish to bring before you, and that is that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the great need of China. Buddhism and Tauism can make the people superstitious, but not religious. The tendency of Confucianism has been to dry up the religious faith of the nation, and make it the most

unspiritual thing imaginable; there is no power in the religion of the country to develop a high and holy character; there is no power there to clothe humanity with beauty and grandeur. Christianity alone can do this; and hence I plead here most earnestly for China, that you send missionaries out to China—your very best men—to make known the glad tidings of salvation, because in my deepest heart I believe that the regeneration of China depends upon it.'

Then he asked, 'What are the Churches of Christ doing for China?' and gave a description of the wonderful opportunities presented in every direction in that country for preaching the Gospel, describing what work had been done, and spoke in warm terms of the value and character of the converts, illustrating this by examples within his own experience. He next appealed for men, and told the meeting what kind of men were needed:—

'We want also your best men. We want able-bodied men, because there is a great deal of physical work to be done in China. We want able-souled men. You must not send us to China, nor, I believe, to any other part of the heathen world, inferior men. We want men with the three G's at least—grace, gumption, and grit. A graceless man as a missionary is a pitiful object to behold; but I have almost more hope of a graceless man to begin with than of a man without common sense; for, as Jonathan Lees told you some time ago, if a man has no grace, he can get it for the asking, but if he does not bring common sense with him into the world, he cannot get it at all.

'We do not want John Bulls; we do not want Taffys; we do not want Jonathans; we do not want men to go to China and say, "I am an Englishman, or a Briton, or an American." No, we want men—many-sided men, full-orbed men, full of solar light, full of humanity, and full of the Holy Ghost. Give us such men, not by the tens, but by the hundreds, and I will promise you that within twenty years a great revolution will take place in that Empire. What is the great need of China at the present time? A mighty band of mighty missionaries, a mighty band of mighty preachers —men that can preach like Whitefield, like Wesley—men that can talk like Dale. Do not send us into China your weaklings—men that stammer, and cannot interest an English congregation. A man that cannot talk English will never be able to talk Chinese; and do you expect to see a man that cannot influence an English congregation move the hearts of the phlegmatic Chinese? It is utterly impossible. We must have the best men if we have any at all; and as for your inferior men, keep them for yourselves.'

This naturally led on to the serious question of the missionary spirit in the Church, and the need for a fresh kindling of that spirit. The address then closed with a very bold and faithful dealing with the question of the future condition of the unevangelised heathen, controversy on the future state being at that time a very serious question in the thought and life of the Churches:—

'There is one important point on which I want to have a little talk with you; and the point is this. I

have come back from China at the end of some twenty-six years, and I find that the England and Wales at the present time are not the England and the Wales of my boyhood. I find that great changes have taken place in the attitude of many in this country towards the missionary cause. You do not seem to me to believe in the old-fashioned way at all—many of you; and one reason for that is that a great and important change has taken place in your theological opinions in regard to the destiny of men, and especially in regard to the destiny of the heathen. Now I am a missionary, and I have been compelled to look at these changes and to put this question to myself: "If this view is the correct one, or that, or that, or that, what would be the result to me as a missionary?" I am not going to tell you what my views are: you have no right to ask me, and I am not going to ask you. I am not going to commit myself here to-night at all. I do maintain one thing, however, that in view of these differences of views, I as a missionary have a right to accept that view that God gives me on my knees, and I do protest, with all my might, against any brother calling me a heretic because I differ from him.

'Now, then, let us go on. In going up and down this country, a man comes to me sometimes and says, "Mr. John, do you suppose that all the heathen are going to hell?" And his impression is that if they do not go to hell, he has nothing to do with the mission work. Well, that is one way of putting the question; but there is another way of putting it, and I sometimes turn round and say, "Sir, do you suppose that they

are all going to heaven?" I do not know where they are going to; but one thing I am perfectly sure of, that they are not fit to go to heaven; and if I could tell you to-night that all the Chinese were launched into heaven just as they leave this world, I venture to say, my friends, that very few of you would care to go there at all, unless you went as missionaries. Another says, "Mr. John, here is a man trying to live up to the light, feeling after God. What becomes of him?" That is a difficult question, too, but I have no hesitation in saying this, that he who worketh righteousness, whether in China or England, is accepted by Him. But then another man tells me, "Well, Mr. John, my theological views are changed, and I do not see that I can take any special interest in the missionary work after this." There is the old view, which, I suppose, may be presented in this aspect —that the majority of the heathen go down into endless conscious misery on their departure from this life. Do you believe this? Do you know what you are believing? I do not say you are not right, but do you really know what you are believing? If that be true, just look at what it means in regard to China. In China it is computed that some 33,000 die daily—that the daily mortality of China would drain England of its population in two years, London in four months, and your Manchester in nine days. Do you believe that these millions upon millions of adults are sinking into hopeless misery as they depart this life? If you do, then I do ask, in the name of God, why don't you send missionaries out to save them? If you do, why

is it that you do not go out yourselves to try and save them from such a terrible calamity?

'"Well, but I do not believe," another man says, "in the old view. I believe in the destruction of men after a certain period of probation or punishment; I believe that they are blotted out of existence or shrivelled up into nothing." I have been compelled to put this question to myself, "Granted that this is the Biblical view, what then? Do you go on with your missionary life?" and I have come to the conclusion that, if this is the true view, I can draw from it sufficient motive to go on with my missionary life. Here is a soul, capable of dwelling for ever with God. Here is a soul, capable of eternal existence, of eternal blessedness and happiness, capable of extending into a seraph, shrivelling up into nothing, or blotted out of existence. What would be the blotting out of ten thousand worlds compared with the blotting out of one soul? I do not know how you feel, but I feel that it would be worth my while going round and round the world in order to save one from such collapse.

'Then there comes the universal restoration view. Some say, "I do not believe in the old or in the second view, but I believe all souls shall be restored at last." What then? I am glad to be able to tell you I have looked at that view in its face, and I have come to the conclusion that I can draw even from that view sufficient motive to go on with my missionary work. Suppose, for instance, an angel were to come to me when I lay my head upon my pillow this evening, and whisper these words in my ears, "Brother, all souls

are to be restored at last; all the heathen are to be restored at last; the Chinese are to be restored at last. You are only just beginning your missionary work, there is a long, long missionary life before you; your work in China is a mere school in which you are preparing yourself for a grander work by and by." What would be the effect of it upon my mind? To paralyse my hand? To prevent me going back to China? No, on the contrary. I feel that if an angel were to reveal that to me as the truth of God, the spark of missionary enthusiasm in my heart to-day would burst into a flame.

'I should reason in this way, "Is it so? Can it be that the human soul is worth so much? Can it be that human souls are so dear to the heart of the Father? Can it be that that great atonement can cover all guilt, and that that mighty Spirit contains all souls?" If this be true—if it be true that all souls are to be redeemed, then I go in for the missionary life, not only for this æon, but for the æons of æons until the Christ of whom we have heard so much these days has put all His enemies under His feet, and presented the kingdom to God the Father.'

Mr. John's address produced a profound impression, but men asked with interest what his view on this debated subject really was. The following letters may help to answer this question. The first was written to an intimate friend in England whose acquaintance Mrs. John and he had made during their visit, and with whom he has ever since kept up a close correspondence:—

'Have you read Dr. Dale's missionary sermon at Dr. Allon's church on the missionary Sunday? I like it and I don't like it. . . . His main point is that the heathen have no chance except that which is given to them in this life. If that is the case, let us say at once that all the heathen populations of the earth from the beginning till now are lost, for none of them live up to the light which they have. There may be *one* here and there, but they need not be taken into account, for they count for nothing as compared with the mass who live not up to that light. All the heathen annihilated without a chance except the poor one given them in this life! What an awful fact, *if it be a fact.* It makes my soul tremble all over as I think of it. Better annihilate them with Dale than send them to endless torment with Spurgeon. But both thoughts are terrible.'

Mr. Foster was in England on furlough in 1887, and to him also Mr. John wrote about Dr. Dale's sermon, and entered more fully into criticism of Dale's position and of the whole subject. He had shortly before written to Mr. Foster about another preacher who seemed to be stating and emphasising the old view on the subject. These two letters indicate very clearly the direction in which his thoughts were tending, if not the conclusions he had reached:—

'Have you seen Dale's sermon at Allon's church? If you have not, I should like you to try and get it and read it. It is *far* from being characterised by clearness of thought. But it is an emphatic declaration of his sentiment in regard to the destiny of the heathen

in view of the controversy which has been raging in America of late on this mysterious theme. If I understand Dale rightly, his position is this: (1) Christ died for all, and all *may* be saved. (2) All who reject Christ in this life are hopelessly lost. (3) The heathen, not knowing Christ, *cannot* reject Him, and therefore cannot be lost on this account. (4) They, however, have the law of righteousness written on the tablets of their hearts, and will be saved or lost according as they obey or disobey this. (5) Very few of them do obey this law—*perhaps none.* (6) Hence the heathen are hopelessly lost, and must be so in the future as in the past, unless the Gospel of Christ is given them. (7) Their destruction, however, consists in their annihilation as conscious beings. There is to my mind something very dreary in all this. I would prefer the old Calvinistic view. God has His elect whom He will save in and of His infinite mercy. The rest perish on account of their sin and in their sin. Only I would adopt the destruction theory in regard to the future of all such. The doctrine of eternal conscious misery is not an *organic* part of Calvinism, and might be safely left out. By leaving it out Calvinism becomes not only the most logical scheme that has ever been propounded, but a perfectly *tolerable* one also.

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'I see that Mr. —— is making use largely of the argument based upon the old view of the doom of the heathen in his addresses. That does tell upon certain minds; but his way of presenting the argument is becoming more and more unbelievable to

thinking minds. The educated Christian consciousness finds it impossible to accept the views of our fathers on this subject. What is the ground—I mean *Christian* ground—on which our appeals on behalf of missions should be made in these days, so as to command the homage of men of culture and piety? Perhaps you are getting new light on this subject, and if you are, perhaps you will send me a ray or two when you have time.'

At the Valedictory Meeting held in the Weigh House Chapel on January 12, 1882, Mr. John spoke again at some length upon the condition and needs of China, and the kind of work that was being done, and laid stress once more upon two points of urgent need, the first being the revival of the spirit of prayer in the Churches and the restoration of the missionary prayer-meeting, and the second the urgent need for strong men for China :—

'But these figures do not represent even the *apparent* results of our labours. There are hundreds around the various mission stations who are standing somewhere between the two kingdoms, and we are constantly receiving men into our churches who have been halting between two opinions for years. We are gradually filling the air with the music of the Cross, and saturating the minds of the people with the story of Jesus. In many places the people are beginning to question their old creeds and superstitions. Some have already cast them aside as worthless things; and there are not a few who have become Christians in sentiment, though they have not joined us. Among our converts

there are men who have undoubtedly been born again, and who would adorn any Church in any Christian land. Since my return I have had an opportunity of comparing the Christians of China with those of this country, and I am bound to confess that they have risen rather than fallen in my estimation.

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'I would suggest that special attention be given to the missionary prayer-meeting. Let it be resuscitated where it has died out, and let an earnest effort be put forth to make it a really interesting, instructive, and attractive service in every case. The materials for this are abundant; and the pastor in whose soul there dwells a spark of missionary enthusiasm would have no difficulty in kindling a fire that would light up and keep warm the hearts of all present. If, in addition to this, a missionary sermon were preached occasionally by the minister himself, it would be a comparatively easy matter to create and sustain the missionary spirit in the church and congregation. The effect of this on the general contributions of the churches towards missions can be easily foreseen. Once an intelligent and prayerful interest in the work is generally awakened, there will be no lack of means to carry it on.

'Then shall we have systematic, conscientious giving practised by rich and poor in this department of Christian service. If I may judge from my own observation, I should say that the poor of our congregations are less to be blamed than the rich in this matter of giving, and what we want is to get the rich to give of their superfluities as freely as the poor

are giving of their necessities. Let the wealthy men of our churches deny themselves a few of their easily-dispensed-with luxuries for the sake of Christ and His kingdom, and we shall have no difficulty in doubling our forces in China as well as in other fields. Why should not some of those whom God has so richly blessed with means undertake the entire support of one or more missionaries? And why should not some of our wealthiest churches do the same?

'In conclusion, I appeal for men. We want men of sterling character and worth—men of tact, spirit, and energy—manly men, full of grace and common sense. Give us highly cultured men, if they can be found. But if not, then give us men possessing a good, sound English education. Such men, if filled with the Spirit of God and fired with the missionary enthusiasm, will not fail to do a noble work for God in any part of the mission-field. The great need of China is men—not mere wise men or learned men, but men of deep conviction; men who feel that they have been separated and called for a great work; men who are conscious of the all-consuming power of the love of God; men with whom it is a passion to save men, and who are prepared to brave all things and endure all things in order to finish the work which they feel in their inmost soul that God has given them to do. The old dread of the man-inspired missionary is still upon me.

'I have not the least desire to see any of such going forth to the heathen world. But can I be wrong in supposing that there are in our universities, colleges, and

churches many who are called of God to be missionaries? It is to them I appeal. I ask them to consider the claims of China and other parts of the mission-field, and to listen for the Divine voice in respect to the course which they should adopt. I do not invite them to a life of ease and self-pleasing, but to one of trial and self-abnegation, of hard toil and patient endurance. Still, I am prepared to promise them a joy in this work such as will enable them to understand what the Master meant when He said, "My peace I give unto you." The romance of missions is a home dream; but the blessedness of the missionary life is a reality, gloriously verified in the experience of every one baptized to the work. Are there no young men of independent means who will go forth and support themselves on the field? Are there no fathers and mothers who are prepared not only to offer their sons and daughters on the altar for this high and holy purpose, but also the gold and the silver required to meet their wants?'

Such appeals, urged with all the force of a life which had responded to the Divine call, could not fail to produce a deep impression upon any young and earnest hearts who listened to them, though it is not possible to trace the result in many cases. Many years after, when the Central China Religious Tract Society issued an appeal for the commemoration of the Jubilee of their President by the erection of a building at Hankow to be used as their dépôt, a Baptist missionary in Shantung sent a contribution, and wrote:—

'I do so with peculiar pleasure, not from any special interest in the Tract Society—good causes are legion, and this does not appeal to me more than others—but solely as a small token of veneration for the Prince of living missionaries in China. As a school-boy aged sixteen, I heard Griffith John in 1881, and then and there vowed I would be a missionary in China. In 1892 the vow was fulfilled, and the vow made as a boy under the influence of a single speech of Griffith John's has never been regretted. It is more than twenty-three years since I saw his face and heard his voice, but I am glad of this opportunity of showing, in however small a way, my appreciation of one who under God called me to the noblest service and the grandest mission-field in the world.'

Before leaving England, Dr. John gathered up the substance of his speeches, with a great deal of other matter, in a pamphlet on *China's Need and Claim*, a statement of the whole case as it then presented itself, which was of great value to many who were anxious to promote the cause of missions.

CHAPTER XVI

SORROW—ANXIETY—HONOUR

THE renewed illness of Mrs. John almost immediately after their return to China, necessitating her departure to America for further medical treatment within six months, was a very heavy trial to Mr. John. He met it by entering more fully and earnestly into the varied work which came to his hand.

Even before Mrs. John left, he wrote: 'I seem to have been plodding on in China, attempting much, but achieving little. Ten years more and my working days will be over. Others will take my place and carry on the work. Oh how I desire to make these ten years a decade worth living, fruitful in deeds and results.' His anticipation as to the termination of his life-work has been happily falsified, but the years were certainly richly fruitful in varied results of hard and earnest labour.

There was a considerable change in the personnel of the Mission at the beginning of this period. The Rev. E. Bryant, who came to England on furlough in 1880, found it necessary to retire from the Society's service in consequence of the state of Mrs. Bryant's health, but

acted as the agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society in North China for some time. The Rev. T. Bryson left on furlough in 1883, and was transferred to the North China Mission when he returned to the field. Dr. Mawbey also, who had been medical missionary in Hankow from 1879, returned to England in 1883, and his place was taken by Dr. Thomas Gillison, who had been sent out to be one of the pioneers in Sze-Chuen. The Rev. Arnold Foster was happily still in Hankow, and the Rev. William Owen, who had been detained in Hankow to fill the vacancy caused by the successive furloughs of Messrs. Bryant and Bryson, became, like Dr. Gillison, a permanent member of the Mission, and for ten years rendered devoted service in Wuchang. The Mission was further reinforced by the arrival of the Rev. A. Bonsey in December 1882, followed by the Rev. C. G. Sparham in January 1885. Since then the staff of workers connected with the London Missionary Society's Mission in Central China has been nearly quadrupled, but Messrs. Foster, Gillison, Bonsey, and Sparham are still active associates of Dr. John in a delightfully intimate fellowship of service.

China was not in a particularly happy condition in her foreign relations. Trouble with Great Britain on account of the murder of Mr. Margary had only just been settled after long and tiresome negotiations. A war with France, in consequence of disputes and misunderstandings in Tonquin, broke out in 1884, and dragged its humiliating course through several weary months of mutual recrimination before it was settled by

the payment of a very heavy indemnity on the part of China. Mr. John's allusions to this conflict, however, show how little such troubles affected China as a whole. For a time there was considerable unrest and apprehension in Canton and South China generally, but the peace of the Yang-tse valley was never seriously disturbed. In November 1884 he wrote:—

'This miserable French war is still dragging along its slow and trying existence. We wonder when it will come to an end. I am glad to be able to say it has not affected our peace. Everything has been very quiet here, and we have been able to carry on our work without interruption.'

In another letter written about the same time he says: 'The people around us seem to me to take no other than a speculative interest in the quarrel.' A few months later, after a tour in the country, he again notes that the war with France does not trouble the people in Hupeh much. 'There is but little patriotism in the Chinese mind. The Chinaman feels a good deal of interest in his family, but not much in his country.'

While all this was true, and evidences multiplied that the people when left to themselves were not only peace-loving, but disposed to be very friendly, there were also evidences that the official suspicion and dislike of all foreigners was never dead, though often dormant, and that when it set itself to the mischievous task of rousing ill-feeling, the ignorant populace were very easily excited to a condition of fear and passion which might prove quite uncontrollable. Mr. John

had very clear evidence and very painful personal experience of the way in which the passions of the mob were roused against the foreigner by the direct action of the officials during more than one visit to Hunan. He was also the principal means of tracing to its source, and compelling the Government to stop, an official agitation in 1891, which threatened the life of every European and every Christian convert in Central China.

A very striking illustration of the way in which the Chinese can be excited to the wildest condition of panic occurred at Hankow early in 1883. The writer was at that time visiting China as a deputation on behalf of the London Missionary Society. As the steamer approached Hankow, some miles before reaching it, numberless boats of all sizes were met crowded with people who seemed to be hurrying down stream in a great state of excitement. Then crowds appeared on the river bank, increasing every moment in density, all laden with boxes and bundles, or wheeling their belongings along in barrows, and all evidently intent on flight. Thousands of persons, men, women, and children, were leaving Hankow. On arrival, the city was found to be almost deserted. Warehouses, shops, and houses were closed, and the streets, which are usually thronged with hurrying crowds, were empty and silent. Mr. John wrote during the panic to Mr. Bryson, who was in England, as follows :—

'We are in the midst of a fearful panic, which commenced at the beginning of last week. It is now

subsiding, I am thankful to say; but it has been a terrible time to the people. On Thursday last the people seemed to me almost daft with terror. The gates of Hankow had been closed, on account of the flocking of the people out of the place, and there was no exit for them except by river. In the afternoon and evening they were paying as much as 1000 and 2000 cash for crossing the river, or for being taken below the city wall. Tens of thousands of people spent the night on the plain.

'The whole thing sprang from a vague rumour that the place was full of members of certain secret societies, and that they were going to rise on Thursday night. Nobody seemed to know where the enemy was or what he was. The danger was felt to be a sort of evil spirit hovering over the place—invisible, impalpable—but there, and threatening the destruction of all the inhabitants. Thursday evening and night passed off quietly, and a beautifully bright sun rose on us on Friday morning. Mr. Thompson and I were going to Wuchang on Saturday afternoon to spend a little time with the converts. On Saturday morning we learnt that the panic had reached Wuchang, and that all the gates except two were sealed, and that it was with difficulty *any one* could pass through. On Saturday the authorities began to chop off people's heads, and they have been going on with the terrible work ever since. Between forty and fifty heads have been taken off already, and there are more to follow. A real evil, I think, has been discovered, though I am afraid some of the innocent are among the executed. I trust that rest

and peace are about to be restored. But the people have had an awful scare, and have been put to heavy expense in moving. More than half of the population of Hankow left the place, and at the end of last week it looked empty.'

Mrs. John returned from New York in November 1883, and for two years was able to take her place and exert her active and useful influence in the life of the Mission before the final parting came. Mr. John's only daughter also returned from school in November 1884, and has ever since ministered to her father's comfort with most devoted and loving care. Miss John married the Rev. C. G. Sparham in 1891, the marriage being one which gave very great satisfaction to her father.

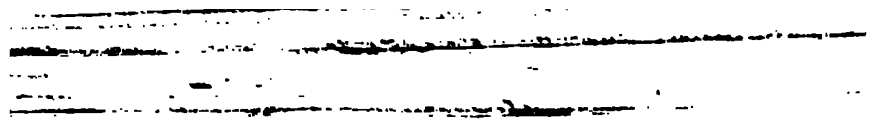
It is scarcely possible, and if it were it would not be desirable, to enter with any fulness of detail into the ordinary course of Mr. John's work during these busy years. There was certainly no relaxation of energy, or limitation of work, or diminution of enthusiasm. True to that imperial instinct which is so marked a feature in his life, he had not been back in Hankow many weeks before he wrote to the Directors of the Society:—

'I want to call the attention of the Directors to Korea. America has just concluded a treaty with Korea. England will follow immediately. Shall not the London Missionary Society be first on the field? First or not first is a matter of little importance, all I am anxious about is that we should enter in at once. I tried to move the Directors to establish a



Photo] [*Yung Fong, Hankow.*

GRIFFITH JOHN AND HIS GRANDSON, BRYNMOR SPARHAM.





Mission in Japan, but in vain. I do trust they will not ignore the claims of Korea.'

Six months later he went in company with Mr. Archibald upon another adventurous, and as it turned out, perilous trip into Hunan. In justification of this journey, he says, 'I wanted to have a good preaching tour, and I wished to do something towards opening up that magnificent province more effectually for missionary operations.' A single extract from Mr. John's narrative will suffice to illustrate the perils of the journey, and to give point to the statement that anti-foreign agitations have usually been commenced and engineered by the ruling class:—

'The first place of importance we came to after crossing the lake is the city of Lung-yang. In order to make what follows intelligible it is necessary that I should mention the fact that a Roman Catholic priest was at Lung-yang when we arrived. He was on his way to Hankow from Chang-teh, where he had been making an ineffectual attempt to purchase property and establish himself. Living in his boat, and anchoring on the opposite side of the river, the people and himself had seen nothing of each other during the seven or eight days he had been at Lung-yang. It would appear, however, that the magistrate and the gentry had made up their mind that he had come there with the view of attempting a settlement among them, and that they were determined to give him a hot reception should he have the hardihood to show his face on shore. I may state that we knew nothing of his movements beforehand, and that we saw nothing

of him during our short stay at Lung-yang. It was late in the afternoon when we arrived, and therefore did not land that day. Next morning, about 9 o'clock, we went on shore, and began our work of preaching and book distribution.

'For some time everything went on very quietly, and I thought I had never met with a people more inoffensive than the people of Lung-yang. Soon after entering the city gate, a man passed us, with a long slip of red paper in his hand, which we found to be a placard, denouncing the foreign barbarians, and calling on the people to rise *en masse* and cast them out of the city. I followed the man to the gate, and saw him post the placard. I thought it advisable to take no notice of it, and went on with my work. By and by another came up to me with a handful of placards, which he was going to scatter over the place. He shook them in my face, and told me that I must get out of the city at once. I told him that I had a perfect right to be there; that my object was not to rent houses or buy ground, but simply to preach the Gospel and distribute good books; and that before leaving the city I must see the magistrate and explain matters to him. He told me that it was a matter which concerned the people and not the magistrate, and that the people insisted on my leaving the city at once. I called his attention to the fact that the people were quiet enough, and that he and two or three more with whom he appeared to be associated were the only persons who showed the least objection to our presence in the city. He then took hold of

me, and, dragging me by the coat, declared that I must get out of the city at once. The others went for Mr. Archibald and made a similar attack upon him.

'By this time a crowd was gathering around us, and becoming every moment more and more excited. Among them I observed three or four soldiers, and now and again I could hear them say, almost in a whisper, "Don't strike." We showed our passports, and endeavoured to explain matters to the people; but the few men who were acting as ringleaders were inexorable. Nothing would satisfy them but our immediate exit from the city and departure from the place. We asked these men to show us the direction of the magistrate's office; but they positively refused to do so. We asked the people, and they declined. We then went in one or two directions in quest of the office, and, with the help of the boys who were following in the crowd behind us, we managed to find it.

'At the office an attempt was made to keep us out; and, having got in, another attempt was made to get us out without seeing the magistrate. After long waiting, however, and much useless quibbling on the part of the underlings, we were introduced to the great man.

'You have been often told how sadly wanting in truthfulness the Chinese as a people are, and how much in their element they appear to be when telling a barefaced falsehood. We had a striking instance of the moral rottenness of the Chinese in this respect during this interview. A despatch was sent by the magistrate of Yo-Chow to the magistrate of Lung-

yang respecting us. We had a conversation with the messengers on their way thither, and we met them again on their homeward journey; so there can be no doubt as to the despatch having been sent and delivered. When, however, the attention of the Lung-yang magistrate was called to this fact, and pointed to as a reason why he should have known who we were and whence we had come, he immediately denied that any such document had been received at his office, and got all the underlings of the establishment to join him in the denial. "Did any despatch reach this office from Yo-Chow?" The question was put with much show of indignation. "No! no! no!" was the prompt and emphatic reply. It was a sad spectacle; but it would have been useless to argue with men who think no more of perjuring themselves than they do of sipping a cup of tea.

'Gradually the fact that we were not connected with the priest, and that we had not come to Lung-yang to purchase property and settle down at the place, dawned upon the mind of the magistrate. He seemed somewhat amused when the mistake became quite apparent, and expressed his willingness to allow us to remain in the city for a day or two and do our work. He sent for the constables of the place, in order to explain to them the object of our coming to Lung-yang, and to give them instructions respecting our safety. As they made their appearance one after another, we had no difficulty in recognising them as the very men who had been troubling us in the streets. "Why," said I to the magistrate, "these constables are

the men who have been doing all the mischief. They have been doing their utmost to inflame the mob. Even the placards have been carried about and posted on the walls and gates by them. It is very clear to me that the uproar of to-day has had its origin in this office, and that these men have been acting under instructions." The magistrate did not attempt to deny the fact, but simply excused the policemen and himself on the ground that it was done in ignorance of our non-identity with the priest and of the object of our visit. He then sent for two of the leading gentry. Whilst he was explaining to them the mistake which had been made, it became still more clear that the entire scheme had been hatched in the magistrate's office by the gentry, with the magistrate himself at their head. I endeavoured to point out the wickedness, meanness, and danger of such a course; but they evidently looked upon it as an excellent stroke of policy, and begged us not to be offended, as it had not been intended for us.

'By this time the large square in front of the office was crowded with an excited mob. It became clear to us that no more work could be attempted in the circumstances, so we expressed our willingness to return to our boat and leave the city at once. The gentry and authorities had succeeded in bringing the mob together, and in rousing the fears and rage of the ignorant people to a pitch which no ordinary methods could control. The one question of importance to us now was, how to get to our boat, and away from the place, without further molestation. The magistrate

himself felt the gravity of the situation, and sent for an escort of soldiers from a camp hard by. Without this escort we could not have reached our boat without being seriously bruised; and something worse might have happened. Even with the help of these men we escaped with difficulty. One cut-throat made a rush at me in the street, and would have prostrated me in an instant, but for the prompt intervention of one of the braves in charge.

'I shall never forget the sight which the square in front of the magistrate's office presented as we emerged from the inner court. It was thronged with thousands of people, among whom there were not a few who would have rejoiced to imbrue their cruel hands in our blood. A narrow path was cleft for us in the midst of that thick mass by the soldiers and policemen; and with the help of the military mandarin and his braves we passed through, and ultimately reached our boat, without receiving any injury. We were obliged, however, to leave the place at once, for any attempt at delay would have led to an assault on the boat. Just as we were leaving for Chang-teh, the priest left for Hankow.

'Let it be understood that the opposition to the priest, both at Lung-yang and Chang-teh, does not spring from the fact that he is a Roman Catholic, but from the attempt he has been making to establish himself at the latter city. Any foreigner attempting to effect a settlement in that region would meet with a similar treatment. There are cities in Hunan into which no Protestant missionary has been allowed to

enter and carry on any work whatever. Lung-yang and Chang-teh were not among them. Both cities have been visited repeatedly, and a good deal of work has been carried on even within the walls. It was only when an attempt was made to rent or purchase houses that this bitter anti-foreign feeling broke out at these two places; and the result is that even the ordinary work of preaching and book distribution can now be carried on in that part of the province only with much inconvenience and no little risk.

'The Lung-yang case throws no obscure light on the way most of the rows with which foreigners have to do, in travelling in China, are got up. The people by means of placards are inflamed, an assault is made, the foreigner has to run, and the news of a mighty uprising and a glorious victory is noised abroad. The placards are always issued by the gentry with the full cognisance of the magistrates, and simply fathered on the people. In the magistrate of Lung-yang, and the two scholars we met at his office, we had unquestionably the very authors of the placards that were issued on that day; and the very spirit of the storm which threatened our destruction must have come forth from the office itself.'

Hunan was not to be opened to the Gospel for several years after this, and not until after the powers of anti-foreign and anti-Christian hatred had made a tremendous effort to rouse the whole country against the intruders. Griffith John himself had another experience, fourteen years after, of the hostility of the rulers to foreign intrusion, but he steadfastly maintained his aim, and

had the joy at last of being welcomed where he had been cast out.

In 1884 a great trouble arose in the mission church at Hankow owing to the discovery that some of the members had yielded to the opium habit. The evil was dealt with promptly and faithfully as soon as it was discovered, but it recurred more than once in subsequent years. We have already learned the opinion on opium and the opium traffic formed by the young missionary when he first came in contact with it, and his impressions of all things Chinese were still fresh and vivid. He had also made known his opinion in a series of letters to the *Nonconformist* when he was at home on furlough. It is instructive to learn to what extent his judgment had been affected by the experiences of thirty years of exceptionally wide and intimate observation of Chinese life. The conclusions he arrived at are all the more serious as coming from one endowed with Mr. John's optimistic and hopeful temperament. The following quotations are taken from his annual reports of work to the Directors of the London Missionary Society. The first relates to the condition of the church in 1884, the next was written four years later :—

'The life of the church stands nearly where it was. I can see no marked progress. On the other hand, I can see no declension. At the beginning of the year the existence of an evil in the church became known to me for the first time. I found that a number of the converts had fallen into the habit of smoking opium. Most of them were men who were addicted

to the vice before their baptism and had been cured at our hospital. In their case it was a relapse easily accounted for. Some, however, had contracted the habit since their admission into the church. The evil was at once faced and tackled. The opium-smokers were exhorted to come to the hospital and be cured, and told positively that if they did not give up the habit at once, they would be excommunicated from the church. I am glad to be able to say that, with two or three exceptions, all have been reclaimed. Some evinced very deep contrition, and gave us good grounds for hope that their restoration will be final.

'This opium vice is a terrible calamity, and is likely to be a source of much trouble to the churches in China. Once a man has fairly contracted the habit of smoking the fascinating drug, the hold it has upon him is so firm and strong that it becomes almost an impossibility to shake it off. And even when a cure is effected, and freedom obtained, the temptations to fall back into the old state of bondage are so many and so great that no missionary of any experience will ever rejoice over a reformed opium-smoker except with fear and trembling. We were compelled, to our great grief, to cut off one who had given us much joy in the years gone by. At the time, I looked upon this man as one of the brightest as well as most genuine specimens of an earnest, happy, loving Christian man I had seen in China. To find that *he* had become an opium-smoker was in itself a great sorrow to me. But to find what a wreck of his former self he had become through this vice, made me feel unspeakably sad. In trying to help him out of this

vice, I discovered that the moral man was gone, and nothing left but a low, cunning, lying, unredeemable wretch. All that kindness and firmness could do for him was done by the native brethren as well as ourselves, but in vain. He had sunk too low to be reached by any means possible to us.

'Most of those excluded were opium-smokers who had been cured at the hospital. For a time (some for years) they persevere, but ultimately fall back into their old habits. We did all in our power to save them. We invited them all to the hospitals, and paid the expenses of most of them while staying there. Those who accepted our invitation were cured for a time, but only for a time. Back they fell again. I hardly know what to say about converted opium-smokers. We have in our church *some* genuine cases of conversion from among the opium-smokers; but I must confess, after many years of earnest and prayerful efforts to save this class, that my experience has been sad and disappointing. It is not so very difficult to so cure the smoker as to send him out of the hospital healed and reformed. The difficulty begins when he leaves the hospital and gets back into the midst of his old surroundings. The temptations are too strong for him, the craving returns with renewed force, and the poor slave is once more bound fast hand and foot. Then a slight illness is often enough to undo the hospital work. The ailment is almost sure to be put down to the giving up of the pipe. Even the wife in such a case will do all in her power to persuade her husband to take it up again.

'This opium-smoking is an awful curse in China. The longer I live the more I feel it to be so. I cannot understand how any sensible man can speak of it as innocent, and look on the agitation against the opium traffic as a "senseless agitation," an "Exeter Hall craze," arising from the loose statements of a few missionaries. In regard to the evil of opium-smoking, there is only one opinion among the missionaries. They condemn it utterly, and that without a single exception. Why should they do so if opium-smoking is the innocent thing which some men would make it out to be? They do not object to other articles of commerce. Why do they single out this? Is it conceivable that, as a body of men, they should desire to deprive England of an enormous revenue, by abandoning the trade in opium, if they saw no harm in the indulgence? And let it be remembered that the missionaries are the best authorities on the subject. They have better opportunities of knowing what the real state of the case is than any other class of men in China. Among the missionaries we have a large number of medical men, who possess every qualification and every opportunity necessary for forming a right opinion in regard to the opium vice. Not only have they the requisite theoretical knowledge, but also that practical knowledge which arises from personal and practical dealing with the vice.

'What I have said of the missionaries generally, may be said with equal emphasis of the medical missionaries. They condemn it utterly and without an exception. You cannot find a man among them who does not look upon opium-smoking as an unmitigated evil. Surely

this is a fact worthy of serious consideration. These men are neither fools nor knaves. They certainly *know* the truth concerning the matter. Can it be that they have combined to misrepresent it in order to blind the world? Why should they do so? What would they gain by deception? It would be very much more pleasant to them, and very much more convenient to all the missionaries, if they could bring themselves to look upon the vice in a more favourable light. Our converts would be more numerous; for many of those who are now kept out of the churches, on account of the habit, would be admitted, and those who are cut off for the same reason would be retained. We should also move among the people with lighter hearts and brighter hopes. Let it never be forgotten that the missionaries, whether ordained or medical, take the dark view of this question, not because they *desire* to do so, but because they are left without an alternative. They are *compelled* to do so.

'In regard to the opium trade I would repeat what I have said before. The trade has damaged the Christian name in China to an extent hardly conceivable by people at home. Not only has it retarded the progress of Christianity by creating a strong prejudice against us, the preachers of it; it has brought Christianity itself into contempt. As a people the Chinese cannot distinguish between England and Christianity, and consequently the acts of the British Government are supposed to be the expression of Christian morality.'

While in England Mrs. John had collected some money towards the erection of an additional chapel in



Hankow, the old Kia-Kiai Chapel and the hospital chapel being too small for the growing requirements of the Mission. Friends in Hankow, as usual, provided more than half the money needed. It took two years to obtain land on a really good site on the main street of the city. Then a building was erected which, with its various rooms, provided an exceptionally well-equipped and attractive centre for missionary work of many kinds. Above all, it afforded a further and larger opportunity for evangelistic preaching, of which Mr. John availed himself to the full. There is a characteristic reference to this in one of his letters to Mr. Jacob, written in September 1886. It had been a sickly season, and he had himself been seriously unwell. He says :—

'Life is not exactly what it used to be. I work hard still. For instance, I have had three services on more than one day this week, almost every day two, and lots of other work besides. In former days I could go through all this whistling. Now it is labour and more or less of a task.'

In addition to this constant evangelistic effort in the city, the practice of making tours in the districts specially occupied by the Mission was kept up regularly. In fact, though travelling is much more fatiguing now, Dr. John still finds pleasure in this itinerating and pastoral work. It is not difficult to imagine how eagerly those whom he visited must have welcomed the brave and honoured leader of the Mission, and how helpful his teaching and counsel would be to them. Reports of these excursions appear

frequently in his official correspondence and in the Society's periodicals. Those reports are necessarily very similar to each other in their main features, and it is not necessary to reproduce them all. An amusing glimpse of the conditions under which this kind of work had usually to be done occurs in the account of a more than usually extended journey in 1889 to the farthest outpost, one hundred miles north of Hankow. The journey had commenced by a visit to a number of the out-stations in the Hiau-Kan district.

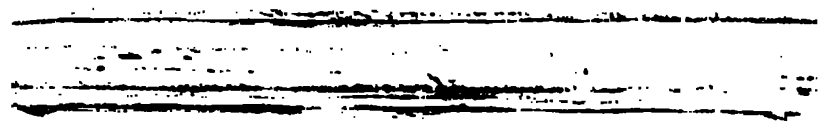
'We left the Liu village on Monday morning, passed through a well-cultivated country, preached and sold books at all the market towns on the way, and reached Whitesand Town a little before dark. This market town is twenty miles from Hiau-Kan city, where we have a station, and about the same distance from Teh-ngan, where the Wesleyan Mission has a station. Wherever we called we found that there were Roman Catholics at the place or the immediate vicinity. We were told, however, that many of their converts are leaving them, and that their number is growing less day by day. Years ago multitudes joined them from all sorts of unworthy motives. These have been gradually finding out their mistake, and the result is a pretty general apostasy. In the cities of Hiau-Kan and Teh-ngan their work is in a perishing condition, and has been so for some time.

'We had no difficulty in finding an inn in Whitesand Town. But, oh, what wretched holes these inns are! In these parts they are specially dark, dingy, and in every way filthy. The floor and



THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY'S CENTRAL CHAPEL, HANKOW.

***In the foreground may be seen** some of the Theological and Normal School students **and native evangelists.** The four schools meet in this chapel for worship every morning, and Sunday and Wednesday afternoons.*



walls are mud, the tiled ceiling is black with the soot of ages, and the rooms are richly festooned with immense ropes of broken cobweb. The lodger has the choice between a "lofty bed" and a "floor bed." The "lofty bed" consists of a low wooden framework covered with a thick layer of straw. The "floor bed" consists of a straw mattress laid on the bare mud floor. The foreigner who wishes to sleep in peace must avoid both beds; for the pulex (aye, and companions more objectionable than pulex) abounds in these inns. The native beds are places where the aphaniptera, the anoplura, the heteroptera, and all kinds of unclean animals delight to hold their nocturnal revelries.

'My plan in travelling overland is to secure two benches and a door, or two square tables, at every inn, and have my own bedding laid upon the top. In this way I manage to get beyond the leaps and bites of these little tormentors. In these inns the lodger is almost sure to have two or more pigs for chums. Just as we were going to ascend our lofty beds the pigs were brought in, and one by one they made their beds in front of our bedroom door. After a little squealing and grunting on their part, we all settled down for the night, and both they and ourselves were soon drowned in deep slumber. In spite of all adverse circumstances, we slept soundly, and rose in the morning greatly refreshed. Immediately after breakfast we went out into the streets to preach and sell books. The people were quiet and respectful in their behaviour, and we had no difficulty in doing a good hour's work before starting on our journey.

'We did not proceed far on our journey before it began to rain. The wind also rose very high, and, between both wind and rain, we were compelled to seek shelter more than once on the way. At one place we turned into a small hut, occupied by two old women, one sixty years old and the other seventy-three. They received us very kindly, and we had some interesting conversation with them. The old woman of sixty seemed much surprised that I was nearly as old as herself and was able to walk through wind and rain at the rate of twenty miles a day. "Have you not a sedan-chair?" "Not a horse?" "Not even an ass?" My reply in the negative evidently puzzled her, and led her to conclude that I was doing all in order to accumulate merit, and that a large heap of it must be laid up by this time. She was told that we were not actuated by the idea of accumulating merit, but impelled by love to God and man. This was a new idea to her. She had never heard of such a thing before. I spoke to her of my hope of eternal life in Christ, and told her that *my* hope might be hers also. "I am not a vegetarian," she replied. "I have performed no deeds of charity. How can I go to heaven? Your merit is great, and of course, you will go straight there; but it is useless for me to think about that."

'I endeavoured to point out to her the way of salvation, and she listened in a way that led me to hope that my effort was not altogether in vain. The old woman of seventy-three was asked by our native assistant if she was *prepared for death*? She replied in

the affirmative with a smile that quite delighted me. I asked her what she meant. "The coffin," said she, "and the grave-clothes are all ready." I asked her where she kept them. Pointing to her bedroom, she replied, "There, in my bedroom." "A strange people these Chinese," I said within myself. But how often are we compelled to say this as we become better acquainted with their ways and habits of thought! Having congratulated the old lady on her good fortune so far, I asked her if she had made any provision for her soul. To this she had nothing to say; and, so far as I could gather, the thought of preparing for death in this respect had never entered her mind. She appeared to be going down to the grave without hope and without fear. Her one source of consolation seemed to be the fact that the "*longevity* boards" had been purchased and the coffin made. I did what I could to show her the value of the soul, and how it might be saved.

'Both old women listened very attentively, and the old woman of sixty appeared to be taking it all in. In parting, I thanked them for their kindness in receiving us into their house, and told them that I was going to heaven very soon, and that I should be glad to meet them there. They were evidently pleased, and I left thanking God for the opportunity of speaking a few words to them. The story of the woman of Samaria has been of great use to me in China. One is apt to pass these ignorant women by, as being beyond the reach of Gospel teaching. Whenever I feel so, this story is sure to remind me of my duty and drive me to my work.

'We had not gone far when the rain came on again, and compelled us to remain at Barley Town for the rest of the day. Of all the holes in which I have spent a night, Barley Town is the most wretched. We entered the best inn in the place; but I would gladly have exchanged it for the poorest stable I have ever seen in Wales. The inn of the previous night is a palace compared with the best house Barley Town can boast of. Next to our inn was a dilapidated, unoccupied house. This was taken possession of by a company of beggars, between whom and ourselves there was only a thin wattle-mud partition, full of cracks and holes. The nine beggars appeared to be very jolly. Before turning in for the night they sang a merry song; and about midnight they woke up and had a good smoke. As the inn itself afforded hardly any shelter from the cold wind, we thought we could do nothing better than follow the example of the beggars and go to bed. It was not quite six o'clock when we thrust ourselves into our sacks (clothes and all); in less than ten minutes we were comfortably warm, and in half-an-hour Barley Town and all its discomforts were forgotten. I commend Barley Town to Canon Taylor's thoughtful consideration. Should he feel inclined to become a missionary, he would find Barley Town the very place to begin his missionary life at. He would have nothing to do but to adopt the habits of the inhabitants of Barley Town in order to have realised in himself his ideal missionary. Mr. Sparham and myself often felt on this journey that the blessing of Canon Taylor was resting upon us.



'It rained a good deal during the night, threatened all the morning, but cleared up beautifully in the afternoon. Our walk to-day was through a hilly region, which charmed us very much. We spent the night in a small hamlet, situated in the midst of delightful scenery. Next morning we started for Ying-shan, and reached the city early in the afternoon. Having deposited our baggage in an inn at the south gate, we went to the north gate, hoping to hear something of Mr. Lo, our convert in Ying-shan. Whilst I was preaching to a large congregation, I saw a venerable-looking old man making his way towards me through the crowd. He asked me if I was Shepherd John, and invited me to come to his house, where I learnt that he was Mr. Lo's father. I told him that Mr. Sparham was a short way behind. He therefore went to find Mr. Sparham, and gave him a similar invitation. At the time, Mr. Sparham was having some difficulty with one of his hearers, who happened to be a little the worse for drink. The old gentleman spoke a word or two to the man, and peace was at once restored. We then went with him to his house, and were much pleased with the house itself (being large and clean), and still more pleased with the inmates. Mr. Lo himself was not at home when we arrived, but was expected every hour. The old gentleman pressed us to stay with him, but we had already made our arrangements for the night, and respectfully declined his kind invitation. In course of the evening, however, he came to see us at our inn, and we had a delightful hour together.

'Very early on the morrow, Mr. Lo himself was at the inn, accompanied by Mr. Liu-tsai, another of our converts in the Ying-shan district. Mr. Lo inquired of Mr. Sparham about the invitation Shepherd John had received to become Prime Minister of England! It seems that a brother missionary had told him that I had been asked to take the chair of the Congregational Union, and that brother Lo had failed to grasp the exact idea. Lo and Liu were delighted to see us, and we were equally delighted to see them. It was not our intention to go beyond the city on this journey; Mr. Liu, however, pleaded so hard on behalf of his village that we felt we had no alternative but to go. We took our baggage to Mr. Lo's house, and then proceeded on our way, accompanied by Lo and Liu. Much of the country through which we journeyed is very picturesque, and we greatly enjoyed the walk. We preached and sold books at all the places through which we passed, in which work both Lo and Liu helped us to the utmost extent of their ability. They seemed to be well known to all the people, and were treated with great respect by every one. Speaking of Lo, one man said: "He is a very good man. He was a good man before he became a Christian, and he has been a good man since he became a Christian." Liu's village is fifteen miles beyond Ying-shan city. The journey thither took us more time than we anticipated; it was quite dark when we arrived. Liu-tsai and his friends received us warmly, and did all in their power to make our visit a joy to us. After an excellent repast, we had a short service with them, which all seemed to enjoy.

Next morning we had another service, at the close of which Liu-tsai's son and grandson were baptized. These are the first baptisms administered in Ying-shan by a Protestant missionary. After the service we started for the city. Lo and Liu insisted on our going back in sedan-chairs, and on paying for the chairs themselves. On our arrival at Ying-shan we found that Mr. Lo's father had prepared a sumptuous feast for us. After the feast we had a very interesting service, conducted by Mr. Sparham and attended by a large number of outsiders.

'The next day was Sunday. My first Sunday in Ying-shan I shall never forget. In the morning we had a service in the large hall, at the close of which Mr. Lo's father and mother, aged respectively sixty-three and sixty-six, were baptized. In the afternoon we went out into the streets to preach. In the evening we had another service in the hall, when I preached again to the converts, and Mr. Sparham to the heathen. The hall was full, and the attention paid to the preached word was marked. At the close of this Sabbath day we felt that we had taken possession of Ying-shan in the name of the Lord.

'When I think of Ying-shan, what rejoices me most is the thoroughly satisfactory character of the converts we have there. Mr. Lo himself is a perfect gem. His father is a man of solid worth. He is a manly man, venerable in appearance, dignified in manners, and greatly respected by his neighbours. He holds the place of a peacemaker among them, and I was told that his decisions are respected as final.

Mr. Lo's mother is a dear old lady. She reads and writes, and is very intelligent for a Chinese woman. Her sister, who is living with them, is such another. She was extremely anxious to be baptized, but did not see her way to give up Vegetarianism. She has been a member of the Vegetarian sect for more than twenty years. I took a great liking to this old lady. When we were about to leave she wept, and said she found it hard to part with us. Her tears brought the tears into my eyes and filled them to overflowing. I have never known in China a family like the Lo family. It is not easy to find a Chinese that you can *love*; but I can truly say that I *love* Mr. Lo, his father, his mother, and his aunt. The old man is a fine specimen of a paterfamilias. Lo is a perfect son, and both are strong Christians. My impression is that we shall soon see a good work springing up in Ying-shan. If we do, it is certain that it will be greatly due to the character and worth of Liu-tsai and the Lo family.

'On Monday we made an early start, in order, if possible, to reach Teh-ngan by night. The distance is thirty miles, and we made a desperate effort to perform the feat, but we had to stop short on account of our coolies. When we entered our inn, we found the front part occupied by a company of gamblers, who were busily engaged with their cards. They went on gambling all night, and looked as fresh at six in the morning as they did at six on the previous evening. I spoke to them about the wickedness of their conduct, but to no purpose. They hardly looked at me, so



intent were they on the game. Gambling is universal in China. The Chinese are a nation of gamblers. Fornication, gambling, and opium-smoking are spoken of by the Chinese themselves as the three great vices of the country, and it is difficult to say which is the greatest curse to them as a people.'

In 1887 the Directors of the London Missionary Society invited Mr. John to pay a visit to England, in order that he might take part in the great International Missionary Conference to be held in London in the following year. The Congregational Union of England and Wales also paid him the high compliment of electing him in his absence to the position of Chairman for the year 1889. The choice of a missionary to this office was a unique distinction, and Mr. John's friends pressed him very strongly to accept the position. It was felt that he well deserved the honour. The official recognition of the missionary enterprise in so marked a way by the Congregational Churches was a thing to be thankful for, and the opportunity of setting forth its claims and telling the story of its triumphs was one which promised large results if used by one who could speak with the eloquence he was known to have. Mr. John had declined the invitation to take part in the Missionary Conference, and he declined to accept the Chairmanship of the Congregational Union, partly under a nervous sense of insufficiency, but mainly because, after very earnestly considering the matter, he came to the conclusion that his duty was to remain in China.

In reply to the suggestion that he should take a

holiday and come to England for the purpose of taking part in the International Missionary Conference, Mr. John wrote to Mr. Thompson, under date December 3, 1887, as follows:—

'I have been in China nearly thirty-three years, and I have not been away from it more than about three years in all. In China itself I have to take my *first* holiday yet, so if I felt the *need* of a change I should not hesitate to take it; but I don't feel the need, and I should like to go on with my work. Indeed, of late my feeling has been that I should like to spend the rest of my days in China, and never go home at all. As the years roll on, and the end is drawing nigh, one feels scarcely prepared to spare even a month for any work except direct work in the country itself. Work seems to be growing on my hands as I go on, and I don't see how I can turn my back upon it whilst health and strength last.

'The one thing that weighs with me most just now is the fact that I have a piece of work in hand and that I cannot possibly complete it before the end of next year or the beginning of the following. I am revising my Wen-li version of the New Testament, and turning it into Mandarin. This I must finish before I leave China. As it now stands it is an unfinished piece of work, and if I leave it in this state it will never be finished. Having spent so much time and strength upon it, I cannot afford to drop it in the midst. I *hope* the New Testament in Wen-li and Mandarin will be completed by the end of next year. Still I cannot tell, for I have many other duties to attend to,

and the work is moving on but slowly. When the New Testament is finished it is possible I may feel it to be my duty to proceed with the Old. Some of the brethren are urging me to this; but I am not at all anxious to attempt the task.'

In November of that year a letter appeared in the *Nonconformist* from the Rev. H. Arnold Thomas of Bristol, proposing that Mr. John should be elected to the Chairmanship of the Congregational Union. When the news reached China, Mr. John wrote more than once to various friends begging that his name might be withdrawn.

'HANKOW, *April* 23, 1888.

'I hope you have made it impossible for my name to come up in May, for I could not possibly accept the honour, even if elected. *I cannot leave China just now*, and I don't feel equal to the task of occupying the Chair of the Congregational Union. The very thought of it makes me feel strange. Please, dear Mr. Thompson, put an end to the attempt of my friends to put me where, I believe, God has not intended that I should be, and I shall feel very much obliged to you. It may come to nothing, and if it does I shall be glad; though it would give me great pleasure to see *another* missionary elected to the Chair.'

After he had sent his answer declining the position which his friends desired to honour him with, he wrote to Mr. Jacob:—

'My mind has passed through a great conflict, but I sincerely believe that I have been guided by God,

and that I have done the right thing in the circumstances.

'As to the Chair itself, I can say sincerely that it presents no attractions to me. I know the honour is great; but it is an honour that I do not covet. The work in China so completely absorbs my thoughts and affections, that everything else appears to me comparatively insignificant by its side.

'The one thing I have had to consider seriously has been the question of duty, in view of the possibilities of doing good to the missionary cause, which the occupancy of the Chair by a missionary would necessarily bring with it. I am not blind to this aspect of the case; and it has cost me a hard struggle to come to the conclusion that, in spite of it, it is my duty to decline the invitations of the Churches.'

A fortnight later, July 18, 1888, he wrote to another intimate friend, Mrs. De Selincourt, a letter containing a keen and suggestive criticism of the May Meetings:—

'Thank you very much for sending me the special numbers of the *Christian World*; also for the *Pall Mall* and other papers which you send me from time to time. It is more than kind of you thus to remember your brother in China. I have read with a good deal of interest much of what the special numbers contain. What a wonderful month your May is. Is there anything like it in any part of the world? And yet I often wonder whether these May Meetings are what they might be and ought to be. It strikes me that the spiritual element in them is not very strong.

Man is very visible in them, but is the presence of God much felt? I don't know. You are in a better position to judge. In reading the addresses and speeches I cannot but see and feel the ability, cleverness, and earnestness of many of the speakers and readers; but I feel that something real is lacking.'

Two years after, referring to the expression of a hope by the Foreign Secretary of his Society that he might yet see the way clear for a visit to England, he wrote as follows:—

'My life-work has been the establishment of this Central China Mission. Translating, book-making, and tract-making have been my pastime. You may imagine my feelings when I think of leaving it—especially when the thought comes up that the next time I leave it, it will be, perhaps, to return to it no more. When I leave it finally it will be with a great wrench—the great wrench of my life. This is the possibility which stares me in the face whenever I think of going home. It has always been my desire to die in China among my people at Hankow, and be buried in the soil of Hupeh. You may call this mere sentiment, and perhaps it is. But sentiment is worth something in this prosy world. It has done much for the world in the days gone by, and will do more in the days to come. I wish I had more of it.'

Though it is somewhat anticipating the order of events, it may be convenient to refer here to the next attempt to get Dr. John to visit England. The Centenary of the London Missionary Society was celebrated in 1895, and it was naturally desired that

on an occasion so memorable the workers in the field should be represented by two or three of the best known and most widely honoured of their number. Dr. John was selected as being *facile princeps* the representative of the China Mission, and great expectations were cherished as to the value of his presence and advocacy of missions on this memorable occasion. A pressing invitation was sent to him by the Directors of the Society to come home and assist them in the celebration. The opportunity was at once seized by friends who loved and honoured him, and who felt that his great work ought to have fitting acknowledgment, to nominate him again for the Chairmanship of the Congregational Union.

Thus once more he had to face the question of duty. He decided it so far as related to the Congregational Union by begging his friends not to persist in the nomination, because he was not prepared to accept the onerous distinction offered him. The invitation from the Directors of the Society presented itself in a different light, and after much deliberation he decided to come and take part in the celebration of the Society's Centenary. On June 25, 1894, he wrote to the Secretary of the Society :—

'Your letter of May 17 is just to hand. Many thanks for all its kind words. It gave me great pain to send the note that stopped my election. I had no idea of the state of feeling with regard to me. Had I fully realised it, I could not have said no. I sent my letter in all honesty, and from a deep sense of what was right and best, and I trust that I acted according to the

will of God. I am glad Mr. Josiah Thomas is the Chairman-elect. He will do splendidly.

'The question now is, shall I come home next year? You *still* ask me to come, and evidently think it my duty to do so. What I desire to do is to stick to my work in China—live the rest of my days here and die here. My heart is here, my soul is here, and, according to my view of things, my work is here. But this call from home, repeated and urgent, is beginning to make me feel that I must tear myself away from China and go. The attractions of the Chair could never move me, and I feel thankful that they never did move me the least bit. But this call, apart from the Chair, touches me; so, God helping me, *I will come*, and do what I can to help you. But the Directors must be held responsible for taking me away from my work in China!!

'I have just been reading the *Independent* of May 17, and have been greatly moved by your speeches and those of others. I feel more sure than ever that the forward movement is of God, and that it must succeed. I bless God for the faith He has put into your heart and the hearts of others. If God brings me home, it will be my joy to stand side by side with Arnold Thomas, Professor Armitage, Dr. Horton, Stanley Rogers, and yourself, and push this movement victoriously through. It has done a vast amount of good already, and it will do more yet.'

Before the year ended a great change had come over the situation in China in consequence of the outbreak of China's infatuated war with Japan. The unrest of

the three previous years threatened to break out again. It was impossible to foresee what would happen. After much anxious debate and some correspondence, he finally decided that the post of duty was Hankow. His decision was conveyed to the Directors in terms which left no alternative but to accept it.

'HANKOW, *February* 11, 1895.

'I don't feel that I can leave these converts in the midst of the possibilities which are right before us. It appears to me, as well as to others, that the Mission in Central China needs my presence just now; and I cannot bring myself to see that it would be right on my part to turn my back upon it at such a time as this.

'Then I want to be here at the close of the war, to take advantage of the opportunities which may present themselves of bringing forward the claims of missions, and of securing further facilities for the propagation of the Gospel in these parts. I am feeling the deepest interest in the momentous events that are now transpiring in China, and in the possibilities connected with them.

'Then I am troubled about the present state of the Mission.

'Such is the state of things without; and such is the state of things within. Looking at both, do you not think that it is my duty to stick to my post for the present? Can I serve the cause of Christ, or even the interest of the Society, in any better way than by watching over the Mission in Central China in the midst of this crisis?'

'*February* 18, 1895.

'I can only say, with Morrison, "It is my duty. Look up! Look up!" We had a glorious day yesterday. The afternoon meeting was turned into a farewell meeting for Mr. and Mrs. Sparham, and a meeting of rejoicing over the centenary of the Society. When our converts in Hupeh heard that I was going home to take part in the celebration of the Society's Centenary, they resolved to send you a congratulatory address along with me. The address is worked in gold and silk on satin. It consists of four pieces, forming a complete set, as for a Chinese hall. It is a magnificent piece of work, and will, I think, be greatly prized by you all. The very sight of it, as coming from the Christians in Hupeh, ought to move many hearts. The idea rose spontaneously in their own breasts, and all the expenses connected with the getting up of it has been borne by themselves. The address was exhibited yesterday afternoon to a crowded congregation of Christians. The day was very wet; but the chapel was crammed, and a genuine "forward movement" spirit pervaded the congregation. I wish you had been here to see what I saw yesterday, and hear what I heard.

'Mr. Sparham will take the address home with him, and present it to the Directors. I hope you will see your way to put it up in Exeter Hall in May next. Let it have a place there; and let it be regarded as a voice of gratitude and praise from Central China for all that God has accomplished in and through our beloved Society during the first hundred years of its existence.'

CHAPTER XVII

TRANSLATING THE SCRIPTURES

IN a letter to the London Missionary Society, just quoted, giving the reasons why he could not accept their invitation to attend the great Missionary Conference in 1888, Mr. John alludes to the pressure on him of a 'piece of work' which he is anxious to finish. 'I am revising my Wen-li version of the New Testament and turning it into Mandarin. This I must finish before I leave China.' The reference takes us back several years in the story of Mr. John's life, and it touches a subject of the first importance in the mission-field, and which has probably proved more difficult and thorny in China than anywhere else. In 1883 Mr. John commenced a translation of the four Gospels into what is known as easy Wen-li. He was led on to the translation of the whole New Testament. Then he undertook the task of rendering the Wen-li translation into the Mandarin colloquial. Having done this, he commenced the translation of the Old Testament, and is still engaged upon that important work. When it is realised that all this has been done in conjunction with much other literary work, and with daily preaching,

occasional itineration, and much occupation of time daily in seeing and talking to Chinese visitors, a fresh idea is gained of the amazing power of work and strength of will which have always characterised Dr. John.

The uninitiated, however, may well ask why such translations were necessary, and what is meant by easy Wen-li and Mandarin colloquial. Are we not taught that amidst many variations in the speech and pronunciation of various parts of China there is but one written language, and that this can be read by educated men throughout the Empire? Is it not a fact also that a version of the Scriptures in Chinese has been in existence for many years, and has been spoken of as remarkably good? All this is true, but it is not all the truth.

The story of the translation of the Scriptures into Chinese brings out in the most striking form the difficulties which have beset modern missionaries in giving the peoples of the world the word of God. These difficulties begin in the fact that they are not natives of the countries for whose benefit they labour, and that consequently their knowledge of the language is only an acquired knowledge. The versions of God's word used by the Western nations were prepared from the original tongues by men of the races for whom they were intended, and who were intimately acquainted with the vocabulary and idiom of the language they used, because it was their mother tongue. The modern translator into the languages of heathendom has a more difficult task. He translates from a language which is

not his own into another which is also foreign to him. This initial difficulty necessitates the revision and re-revision of versions as knowledge of the niceties of the languages grows and as the services of native experts become increasingly available.

A further difficulty arises in the highly developed languages of the East from the fact that their scholars have for many generations cultivated a learned and classical style founded on ancient models and widely differing from the current speech. The Brahmins of South India, for example, have introduced into their literature a large amount of Sanscrit; and the Chinese literati have prided themselves on their classical style, which is necessarily archaic and pedantic as compared with ordinary speech. The result is that while early versions of the Scripture in the languages of barbarous and unlettered people are faulty, because the missionary's vocabulary is still faulty, and he has no books to help him to increase it, early versions in such a language as Chinese are in danger of being too classical and stiff, because the missionary has studied the language largely from books and has not yet become familiarised with the freer idiom of common life. The difficulty of translation has been increased still further in the case of Chinese by a controversy which was maintained with painful bitterness for forty years, over the terms to be employed for God and the Holy Spirit, and which divided the missionary community into two camps.

The Rev. William Muirhead, in an essay read before the Missionary Conference in Shanghai in 1890,

on the history of translations, made the following reference to the version of the Delegates :—

'The so-called Delegates' Version of the New Testament was made by Dr. Medhurst, Dr. Bridgman, and Mr. Stronach; and following it in immediate connection, the translation of the Old Testament was made on corresponding lines by Dr. Medhurst, Messrs. Stronach and Milne. Bishop Boone was associated with the former as a delegate, but was unable from his state of health to take any part in the work. The whole was accomplished between the years 1847-53, and ranks high in the estimation of native scholars. It has been largely circulated, and forms the version in use by the British and Foreign Bible Society. No one can fail to admire the classic beauty and rhythm of the style, and though it is sometimes objected that it is not always so literal as it might be, and that in general it largely exceeds the grasp of ordinary readers, which is, however, a matter of question, there is no doubt as to its supreme excellence as a literary production, its perfect scholarship, its adaptation to the native culture, its unequalled appreciation by careful students, its expression of the highest attainments of Biblical learning, which in numerous cases it seemed to antedate, and, in a word, its incomparable suitability for the end in view.'

This version had no sooner been completed than efforts were made to improve it. Drs. Bridgman and Culbertson, two American missionaries, prepared a version at the request of many of their fellow-workers. This aimed at a more literal rendering of the original

and a less classical style. It was adopted by the American Bible Society, and largely circulated by it.

Other workers followed, such as Mr. Goddard, of the American Baptist Mission in Ningpo, with versions of the New Testament, which have been favourably spoken of, but have not found general acceptance.

The next important step towards the provision of a version of the Scriptures which would be generally acceptable was taken by a small group of missionaries in North China about 1861. Dr. Burdon, of the Church Missionary Society, afterwards Bishop of Victoria (Hong-Kong); Dr. Blodget, of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; Dr. Edkins, of the London Missionary Society; Dr. Martin, of the American Presbyterian Mission, afterwards for many years first President of the Peking University; and Dr. Schereschewsky, of the Methodist Episcopal Mission, united to prepare a translation in the Mandarin colloquial, which is the common form of speech of more than half the population of China. It occupied them eight years before the New Testament was completed. As might be expected, this was a work of great merit in its fidelity to the original, and it proved widely acceptable in North China, but it was not classical Chinese.

Griffith John followed next with his single-handed attempt to make a translation which should combine accuracy of rendering and classical finish with simplicity of diction.

All these efforts to provide a new version of the word of God are indications of a felt need. The high

Wen-li or classical language of the scholar is not suited for present-day life. The man of ordinary education uses plainer and more modern forms of speech, generally described as easy Wen-li, while throughout the whole of North China and down to the Yang-tse the Mandarin colloquial is universally current in common life. A version of the Scriptures in the high Wen-li or classical style gratifies the taste and appeals to the pride of the scholar, but for current use it is quite unsuitable. What this means in giving the word of God to the people of a heathen country may be imagined from the effect which a Latinised Bible would have produced in our own land. Archbishop Trench, referring to the Rhemish and other Latinised and stilted versions of the English Scriptures, says, 'Who does not feel that if our version had arrayed itself in such diction as this, had been composed in such Latin English as this, our loss would have been great and enduring?'

There was certainly no man in China better fitted, and few so well fitted, as Griffith John to undertake the task of preparing a version in easy Wen-li. He had already proved his thorough command of the language by his power as a preacher, and by the remarkable success which had been achieved by his writings. He was also a careful and accurate student, and a man of sound and balanced judgment. Mr. Archibald tells the story of the beginning and progress of the work from close personal knowledge of every step:—

'Another matter which brought Dr. John and myself into close association was his translation of

the Scriptures into Chinese. His desire to do something in this direction arose from a knowledge of the need of a version of the Gospels more suitable for general distribution than either of the two then in use. Of these, one was known as the "Delegates' Version." It had been produced upwards of thirty years previously, and was in the highest possible classical style. Its translators, with the fear of the fastidious taste of the native scholar ever before their eyes, had produced a remarkably fine and polished piece of work, but one which was far above the comprehension of ordinary readers. The other was the Mandarin colloquial; perfectly intelligible, but as open to objection from its lack of literary style as the other was from having too much of it. This was the version generally used in Mandarin-speaking districts, the missionaries rightly considering that intelligibility was the main thing. Still, there was no reason why both good points might not be combined in the same book. Many missionaries thought Dr. John's popular and widely circulated tracts hit the happy medium, and urged the matter on his attention.

'This matter was frequently discussed between Dr. John and myself, and one day—I remember we were wind-bound in the Tungting Lake at the time—he resolved that if the north wind would only cease its blowing, and allow us to return to Hankow again, he would translate one of the Gospels. His idea was, not to embark on a translation of the whole Bible, but simply to give a specimen of what he thought was desirable. The Gospel according to Mark was

chosen, as being the smallest, and duly translated into what we called "easy Wen-li," or easy literary style, a name which since then has come into general use as descriptive of this particular kind of composition. When ready, the Directors of the National Bible Society voted the £5 asked for in order to meet the expense of publishing 1000 copies, and all the more readily that a friend subscribed the money on the spot.

'A great work was then begun, although no one at the time was aware of the fact. Had the translator known that, after the lapse of twenty odd years, he would still be toiling as hard as ever at that translation, or the Bible Society Directors that their modest £5 meant many thousands, and that the thousand copies would total to upwards of six millions, both parties would have begged most heartily to be excused. It is well that the magnitude of the undertakings which men may be called upon to accomplish is at the outset hidden from them, otherwise they would never dare to take them in hand.

'The thousand copies of Mark were circulated amongst the missionaries for their opinions. The expressions received were so favourable, and were accompanied with so many orders for the book, that more printing and further translations followed as a matter of course. Thus, step by step, the work went on till 1890, the year of the Shanghai Conference. By this time the New Testament, together with Psalms and Proverbs, had been completed in both the easy Wen-li and Mandarin styles.'

Of course the work was not universally or com-

pletely approved. In August 1885 a letter appeared in the *Chinese Recorder*, criticising the New Testament severely. The writer admitted that it was 'a most admirable translation in many respects—concise, simple Wen-li, and for the most part faithful to the original Greek.' He objected, however, to so great and important a work being undertaken by one man, and referred to the work of those who prepared the Septuagint Version, and also to the company of translators who produced the Authorised Version of the English Bible, as illustrations of the kind of reverent combination required. Moreover, he insisted on strict rendering of the original text by the inclusion of an equivalent for every word, and he protested against paraphrasing under any circumstances.

This letter led to one from Bishop G. E. Moule, vindicating Griffith John's translation against the criticisms which had been passed, and expressing commendation of the work. It also called forth a communication from Mr. John, in which he made a very interesting statement of his views as to the duty of a translator:—

'To translate is to carry *ideas* and *thoughts* from one language into another; and a true version is one in which the ideas and thoughts are translated in harmony with the genius and laws of the other language, and with all the fulness, force, and beauty possible to it as a medium. It is hardly necessary to observe that a perfect translation into any language is impossible. Languages differ widely in their character and capacity. Men of different nations

view the same object differently, and consequently express themselves differently in respect of it. Then, every nation has regions of thought which are peculiarly its own, and for the expression of which it is rich in words; whilst its neighbour, being destitute of the idea, is destitute also of a fit vehicle with which to carry the idea over.

'Diversities such as these make it often extremely difficult to carry even the thought over from one language into another, whilst they render it impossible always to translate literally. Hence the translator, if he would translate thoughts and ideas, must sometimes abandon the letter, and aim at simply communicating the sense, with all accuracy and fulness possible to him in the circumstances.

'The following are the principal laws by which I have been guided in this work. They are few and simple, and such, I think, as will commend themselves to every student of Chinese who is at the same time a lover of the Grand Old Volume.

'1. Aim at making the version an exact image of the original.

'2. Use those words, and only those words, which shall clearly express all the meaning of the original.

'3. In so far as it is possible, use those words which best correspond with those of the original.

'4. Where a translation *ad verbum* would result in an obscuration or a perversion of the author's meaning, abandon a *literal* version and translate *ad sensum*.

'5. In doubtful passages a version *ad sensum* is to be preferred to a *literal* translation.

'6. Where particular words are wanting in Chinese, have recourse to circumlocution, if by so doing the sense can be made clear.

'7. In all cases consult the genius of the language in which the version is made, and let its characteristic qualities rule as far as faithfulness to the truth and exactness of interpretation will permit.

'These are the few rules which I have laid down for myself. I must leave it to others to judge as to how far they have been adhered to in this version, or rather how far they have been judiciously used as leading principles.'

Mr. John's views on the Delegates' Version, and on the place which such a work as his own would take, were expressed in a letter to the *North China Daily News* in July 1886, in reply to a review in that paper of his version of the Psalms:—

'It has not been my object to bring out a version as a rival to that supplied by the Delegates. I quite agree with the reviewer in almost every word of praise which he bestows upon that great work, and join him in the verdict that Christianity is much beholden to its authors. He is quite right in pronouncing it the most *scholarlike* work, and I have not the least desire that it should be superseded by mine, or by any other version that may yet appear. But I am a practical missionary, and I know from actual experience that the Delegates' Version is, in point of style, far beyond the reach of ordinary readers. Whilst very many of our converts can read intelligently and with pleasure to themselves the Scriptures in the easy *Wen*, there

are but few among them to whom the style of the Delegates does not render the sacred volume a sealed book. The number of people who can read a book in high Wen-li is very small.

'The following is an extract from a letter written to Mr. Archibald by one of the oldest and most intelligent missionaries in Southern China. The writer is an enthusiastic admirer of the Delegates' Version, and yet he feels compelled to confess that its circulation is a waste of time, labour, and money. Speaking of Fuh-Kien he says: "In a province like this, however, where not one per cent of the population can make any intelligent use of a book in Wen-li, the high style of the Delegates' Version is absolutely beyond the literary powers of the majority of the one per cent. The country literati as a rule are below par. Under these circumstances the circulation of the Delegates' Version, I have been long convinced, is a waste of time and labour and money in this province, especially in the country parts. It would be different, of course, in the great city of Foochow, where there are a good many reading men, and for them I would have the Delegates' Version, though Mr. John's Version should be given to these also. We want a version such as that of Mr. John's, and I rejoice that it is being produced." Such is the state of things in Fuh-Kien; and the state of things in the other provinces is no better.

'My object, then, in bringing out a new version of the Psalms as well as of the New Testament has been to meet this state of things. Having finished the

latter, it struck me that it would be well to bring out the former in a style uniform with it, and thus try and make this greatly neglected portion of the Scriptures more familiar to the Chinese converts. In order to realise my object, it was absolutely necessary that the high style of the Delegates should be eschewed, and a much simpler one adopted. It has been my endeavour to hit upon a style somewhat between the high Wen-li and the low Suhwa—not beyond the literary powers of the ordinary reader, and yet high enough to command the respect of the more advanced scholar. It must be left to others to decide as to whether I have succeeded or not. The scholars around me pronounce the version smooth, clear, and idiomatic; and the less well-read converts, who have found the Delegates' Version useless to them, read this with ease and profit.

'My translation has been made from the original Hebrew, with the help of the English versions, and all other help I could command in the shape of commentaries. I have also freely consulted the versions made by the Delegates, Burns, Burdon, Schereschewsky, Bridgman, and Culbertson; I have used every one of these versions, and am greatly indebted to them all. In point of style the Delegates' Version is pre-eminently the classical version; in point of fidelity to the original Hebrew it is inferior to the versions just mentioned.'

Notwithstanding the criticisms of some, it is evident that the new version met with very general acceptance. Bishop Moule, writing in 1884, expresses his satis-

faction with the portions which had reached him in warm though discriminating terms, and says the verdict of his old Chinese teacher is, 'It has literary style, yet they read as easy as colloquial.'

The Rev. A. V. Noyes, of Canton, the well-known missionary of the American Presbyterian Mission, wrote in March 1885: 'I read it (the four Gospels) through carefully, and was greatly pleased with it. I have formerly given to the native preachers under my care one or other of the Gospels, asking them to examine particularly and then let me know their opinion. They have all expressed themselves as much pleased with the translation. I would myself be glad if this could be adopted as a Union Version by all the Missions, admitting the use of either term for God and the Holy Spirit.'

The Rev. Dr. Eitel, of Hong-Kong, whose reputation as a Chinese scholar made his judgment exceptionally valuable, and who examined the work with the minute accuracy of criticism characteristic of German scholarship, said after examining the Epistles: 'I have had occasion to compare a small portion of your version with the previously existing versions at my command, and I am satisfied that your version is a decided improvement upon them all. Nevertheless I am not satisfied with your version.'

Others into whose hands copies came expressed themselves with equal heartiness of approval. In fact, so general was the acceptance of the work, that the following letter was addressed to Mr. John on December 20, 1887, by the British and Foreign Bible

Society and the National Bible Society of Scotland, jointly asking him to undertake the preparation of a version in the Mandarin colloquial:—

'The Committees of the British and Foreign Bible Society and the National Bible Society of Scotland have unanimously and very cordially agreed to join in a request which it is now our privilege to submit to you, namely, *that you should undertake the preparation of a new Mandarin Colloquial Version for China*, to be published on the joint responsibility and at the joint cost of the two Societies.

'We believe that the plan sketched in the enclosed basis, on which we would propose to proceed, is one fitted to give satisfaction to the greatest number of missionaries concerned, and to secure the issue of *a version which, as we would fain hope, may become the authorised version for the Mandarin-speaking districts of China*; but we shall be ready to consider any modification of it which you may be pleased to suggest.

'We are deeply impressed with the importance and necessity of this work, to which, assured of your pre-eminent qualifications for it, we venture to call you. We are not ignorant of the personal sacrifices that may be involved in your consent, but, persuaded that it is in your power *thus to complete the great work you have already done for your adopted country by the publication of your Wen-li Version, we pray God to incline your heart to undertake, under these new conditions, this further task*, and to give you strength and grace to carry it through for His own glory in the bringing in and building up of His Church in China.'

In 1889 the University of Edinburgh recognised the great value of Mr. John's services in literature, and especially as a translator of the Scriptures, by conferring upon him the honorary title of Doctor of Divinity. The only reference to the matter in his correspondence is in a letter to his friend Mr. Jacob, replying to his congratulations, in which he says he does not feel at all at home or comfortable in the new honour!

The relative value of a version translated by a single missionary and one prepared by a company of translators is a question which opens very wide issues, and cannot be discussed here. In like manner, the tempting question of the necessity, or otherwise, for absolute fidelity in rendering every word in the original by an equivalent in Chinese is one which must be avoided. There is much to be said on both sides of these questions, and it is not at all surprising that, general as has been the recognition of the value of Dr. John's labours, the result did not entirely satisfy the missionary community.

One of the most important subjects which occupied the attention of the Shanghai Conference in 1890 was the question of harmonising usage in the versions of the Scriptures, and of providing versions acceptable to all parties. 'It was known beforehand that this subject, which had been the cause of so much discussion and division in the past, would come up for consideration. Much prayer had been offered for the Conference with reference to this special point. Many felt very sceptical as to the possibility of reaching any practical result, and few felt sanguine of success. When the

large representative Committees appointed to consider the subject brought in unanimous reports, proposing practical schemes for realising the end desired, there was a general feeling of surprise; and when, twenty-four hours later, the Conference unanimously adopted these reports, the high-water mark of unanimity and enthusiasm was reached. This achievement was no doubt the *great* work of the Conference, the attainment of which alone is worth far more than all the Conference cost.'

Three Committees were appointed by the Conference to arrange for the preparation of Union Versions in the high Wen-li, the easy Wen-li, and the Mandarin. In each case the Committee asked Dr. John to join their number and become one of the revisers whom they selected for the work. Unfortunately he had been prevented from attending the Conference, and had not witnessed ,or been inspired by the enthusiasm which led the assembly to adopt with such unanimity the resolutions which were intended to bring to an end the differences of the past. He had such a practical knowledge of the difficulties attending the work under the most favourable conditions that he felt convinced these difficulties would be so intensified as to be practically insurmountable when men who represented distinct and strongly divergent principles of translation met to review each other's work. On July 8, 1890, he wrote to the Secretary of the London Missionary Society on the subject, quoting letters which had reached him from Dr. Faber, the Rev. David Hill, the Rev. T. Bryson, and the Rev. J. W. Stevenson, who

wrote on behalf of the three Revision Committees, pressing him in the strongest and most gratifying terms to put aside his objections and join them in their important and difficult task.

He goes on to say :—

'But I feel that the task before the Committees is a gigantic one and I tremble at the thought of entering upon it. This consideration alone is enough to make me hesitate. But over and above this consideration, I have no great faith in the ultimate success of the scheme. The idea is a good one, and I sincerely wish it the most signal success. But how it is going to succeed, I cannot say. Then such questions as these trouble me: Am I called to the work? Would it be right on my part to give up my work as a preacher to the heathen, and a teacher and pastor to the churches? I have always felt that God has called me to preach and teach, and my work as a translator and book-maker hitherto has not interfered materially with this other work. But if I go in for this scheme, everything else must be laid aside for its sake. Would it be right on my part to take a step which would involve this consequence? Then is it God's will that I should give up the thought of going home? If I take this step I shall be fixed in China for all the years to come. And then I cannot ignore the fact that my brethren are thinking deeply and praying earnestly over the matter. The paths of duty seem so divergent and I am puzzled to know what I should do. Please tell me what you think of it all. I want to get your advice in the matter. I know my friend Dr. Lockhart would advise

me strongly against entering on this work. My friend Foster does not believe in the scheme, and cannot advise me to enter upon it. I have very little faith in it myself. Still it is hard to be told that if it fails the blame will be mine.'

Further correspondence failed to alter his feeling, and though he placed all the work he had done unreservedly at the disposal of the revisers, he did not alter his decision not to take any personal share in the proposed revision. How far Dr. John acted wisely in thus standing aside must be a matter of individual opinion, but even those who most deeply regretted and disagreed with his decision must have recognised the purity of motive and the strength of argument expressed in the letter which embodied his final decision :—

'HANKOW, *February* 10, 1891.

'REV. C. W. MATEER, D.D.,
Chairman of the Executive Committee on Mandarin Revision.

'REV. J. W. STEVENSON,
Secretary of the Executive Committee on easy Wen-li Revision.

'MY DEAR BRETHREN,—I am very sorry that I have not been able to write you before now, in reply to your communications of November 20th and December 29th respectively. I assure you, it is not because the purport of your letters was dismissed from

my mind. You will believe me when I say that the question of Union Versions, and its bearing upon the action that I should take in regard to it, is the one question which has been absorbing my thoughts ever since your letters came to hand. I have had to consider seriously many points relating to myself and my work, and I have had grave doubts as to whether it was my duty to lay aside other projects and other lines of work in order to enter upon this new venture.

'Then I have had to consider the scheme, and try to come to a definite conclusion as to whether it is likely to succeed. It has appeared to me that I should not be justified in taking up this work, unless the scheme commended itself to my judgment as likely to secure the desired result.

'The idea of the Conference, to secure one Bible in three harmonious versions, is a magnificent one, and every missionary in China cannot but wish to see it realised. So truly am I in sympathy with the idea, that I am prepared, so far as personal considerations are concerned, to make any sacrifice in my power to help on the work. It has cost me something to come to this point, for these considerations are neither few or insignificant.

'But I have had grave doubts as to the practicability of the scheme, and, I am sorry to add, the more I think about it, the more doubtful I become. I cannot see how the scheme as it now stands can possibly bring about the result hoped for and prayed for by the whole missionary body; and I am very much afraid that the upshot will be the multiplication of versions, and not

the production of one version that shall take the place of the existing ones. Let me touch on a few points of real difficulty which present themselves to my mind and influence my decisions.

'First. There is the question of basis. The Conference has decided that the text which underlies the Revised English Version of the Old and New Testaments shall be made the basis of the three new versions. Are we likely to agree on that point? There are men on these three Committees who would adhere strictly to that text, and there are others whose faith in it is by no means strong and whose policy would be to use it very cautiously and sparingly. The "privilege of deviations in accordance with the Authorised Version" can only give rise to many complications. Bishop Moule has given expression to his views on this important point in the January number of the *Missionary Recorder*, and I must say that my views are in substantial agreement with his. And we are not alone. There are many missionaries in China to-day who would be very sorry to see the decision of the Conference on this point acted upon, and who would be very slow to use any version based upon that text.

'Secondly. There are the principles of translation. Can twenty representative men be found in China whose views coincide on this vital point? But if unanimity on this point cannot be secured, the idea of one Bible in three harmonious versions can never be realised. The split among the Delegates of 1847 sprang from a divergence of views on this point. Though only five in number, they found it impossible to work together.

Again the text underlying the Medhurst and Bridgman Versions was one and the same, but the principles of translation were different, and as a result we have two versions of the same Bible widely divergent in most important respects. Can the present scheme land us in anything better than this? Is it not likely to land us in something far worse? Will not the Committees split and resplit on this very point? And should the separate versions reach completion, shall we find our idea of one Bible in three harmonious forms realised?

'Thirdly. In order to realise the idea of the Conference a common *Chinese* basis is necessary; but there is no provision for this in the Conference scheme. The Peking Mandarin Version, and the Burdon-Blodget Version in Wen-li, are two harmonious versions, and for the same reason. In order to secure three harmonious versions, you must begin with one, and make it the basis of the other two. In this way the end would stand a chance of being secured; without this, I, for one, cannot see how it could possibly be secured. One of the three Committees, a select Committee of, say, seven, might be secured to prepare a draft of a standard version in easy Wen-li. The others would act as a general Committee, to whom this draft would be submitted for revision, to be returned to the original revisers for their final revision. In this way a standard version in Chinese might be secured, which would serve as the basis for all other versions, high Wen-li and Mandarin included. Indeed I think it would be possible to find in China seven men who could unitedly prepare a draft of each of the three versions. Some of

them would be better versed in high Wen-li, some in low Wen-li, and some in Mandarin; but unitedly they would, so far as their knowledge of Chinese is concerned, and fitness in other respects, be equal to the task. I am decidedly of opinion that you must have a standard version in *Chinese* to work from as a basis, and that this standard version should be in easy Wen-li. I don't suppose for a moment that the hint that I am thus throwing out will be taken up, but I am convinced that some such plan will have to be adopted if the desired result is ever to be attained. Even then the difficulties would be many and great; but this, it seems to me, would give the venture a chance of reaching a satisfactory conclusion.

'Fourthly. Apart from the general scheme, there are two difficulties which would face me at once as a member of the two Committees on which I have been invited to act. There is the easy Wen-li Version on which Bishop Burdon, Dr. Blodget, and myself have been elected as translators. We are all three, I trust, equally earnest in our aim to serve Christ in this work of translating His word into Chinese. But our views as to how the work should be done differ widely. Bishop Burdon tells us that easy Wen-li is "practically the same thing as Mandarin with the exception of the pronouns and particles" (see *Records of the Missionary Conference*, p. 102). Dr. Blodget's ideas on this point coincide with those of Bishop Burdon (see *Missionary Recorder*, October 1885, p. 38). The Burdon-Blodget Version in easy Wen-li is not only based on the Peking Mandarin Version, it even follows the grammatical

structure and double-character words of the Mandarin dialect throughout. It may be taken for granted, therefore, that this is their idea of what the new version should be as far as style is concerned. This being the case, they and myself would find it extremely difficult to work together harmoniously on a version in easy Wen-li. From the very commencement we should find ourselves at variance on a point of no small importance. My own idea is that Mandarin is Mandarin, and that Wen-li is Wen-li, and I could have nothing to do with a version in Wen-li which meant nothing more than the changing of pronouns and particles throughout and making slight changes here and there. That is one of the difficulties.

'The other is a difficulty which I should have to face as a member of the Committee on the revision in Mandarin. Speaking of my colleagues, I will say at once that I do not think it would have been possible for the Executive Committee to make a better selection of men. Every one is abundantly worthy of the honour bestowed upon him. But they are all, so far as I know, northern men, and consequently in sympathy with the northern version, and with what is distinctly northern in style. In this they cannot, it seems to me, help themselves. On the other hand, I stand alone, as the sole representative not only of my own version, but also of Central China. Now, in case of difference of opinion, what chance would I have on a Committee so constituted? I do not doubt the perfect integrity of my brethren. I am sure they would, one and all, try and do the right thing in

every instance. In making the above remark, I am simply dealing with a difficulty which must spring up from a certain condition of things. This being the case, would it not be better for me to stand aloof, and for the brethren to take my work and use it as they may think best? A revised edition of it is being put through the press; and it is the best thing I can produce. Even if I were on the Committee, I could give my colleagues nothing better. Where it differs from the Peking and Nanking Versions, I, of course, think it the best. This, however, the Committee will take for granted. It is not necessary that I should be present to make known my preference.

'After much anxious thought, I find that I cannot take up this work in faith, and I know, from past experience, for me to take up such a work as this, without the requisite faith and enthusiasm, would be a great mistake. It is a work that demands great sacrifice, personal and otherwise, and nothing but a firm conviction as to its ultimate success could possibly carry me along. In the circumstances, I feel that I must decline the honour of sharing in this great and important undertaking.

'Nevertheless, I shall ever pray that God's best blessing may rest upon the translators and their work. It will be a great joy to me to find that all my fears are unfounded, and to see the labours of my brethren crowned with signal success. What I have written in this letter has been written with the simple view of explaining my own position. I should be extremely sorry to write a word or say a word to discourage

another. I wish the scheme had been such as to command my own faith and enthusiasm; for in that case I should have felt bound, having been elected, to join the Committee.

'In conclusion, let me express my very sincere thanks to the Committees for their unanimous election of me, and to your two selves for the kind and brotherly way in which you have written me on the subject. To such an invitation and to such letters it would have been a real joy to send a different reply.—I am, dear brethren, yours very faithfully,

'GRIFFITH JOHN.'

As soon as Dr. John had come to a decision on this important question, he laid aside the work of translation. The New Testament and the Psalms were already completed, both in easy Wen-li and in Mandarin, and he had agreed to complete the translation of the Old Testament. He felt, however, that as companies of translators were now about to undertake the duty, it would be better that he should give himself to other work. It was some time before, in deference to the urgent appeals of friends, he resumed his labours on the Old Testament.

CHAPTER XVIII

YEARS OF EXCITEMENT AND CHANGE

THE years during which Dr. John was most closely engaged in the work of translating the Scriptures were by no means barren in other directions. His intellectual activity and his keen interest in public affairs came out again and again in his correspondence, and his wakeful activity in the interests of the Mission found expression in very definite forms.

The time was one of great political excitement and change in Great Britain, and the missionary, though far away from home, and engaged in a work which was entirely detached from the party politics of his own country, was none the less a man and a loyal son of the great Empire of which he was a citizen. As might be expected from his early associations and training, he began active life as a Free Churchman and a Liberal in politics. He is a Free Churchman still, and his Liberalism has survived all the influences which affect the Briton abroad, and which in so many cases convert the democratic Liberal with strong views on the rights of man into the pronounced Conservative with Imperial views on the supremacy of the British race. Writing to intimate friends, Dr. John expressed his opinion

freely on English politics as he learned of them through the newspapers. It is interesting to observe how closely he followed the course of events and how decided his judgment was upon many important points. His political faith has been as decided and as militant as his missionary ardour.

A bright glimpse of that inner life which as a rule strong men say little about comes in a letter to another intimate friend when telling of the progress of the work of translation :—

'*September* 24, 1885.

'To-day I finished my translation of the first twenty-three Psalms. These twenty-three contain my favourite Psalms, taking them on the whole. The first I have always taken as the guide of my life, the last as the story of my life, and both as an assurance from God to me that the life of faith in God and obedience to God is the only true and blessed life.'

In the year following this note George Müller of Bristol visited Hankow during a lengthened tour, and Henry Ward Beecher visited England. Dr. John's impressions of both men found their way into a letter to the same friend :—

'We have just had a visit from George Müller of Bristol. He is a very remarkable man in many ways. He preached once on Saturday, twice on Sunday, and twice on Monday. When leaving on Monday night he told me that he was not feeling at all tired ; yet he is eighty-two years old. On Sunday afternoon he preached to the native Christians in English, myself

acting as interpreter. Our new chapel, which is the largest in Central China, was full to overflowing with Christians. It was a fine sight, and the old patriarch must have felt the inspiration. On Sunday evening at the Sailors' Rest we had a splendid congregation, and Mr. Müller gave us an address of an hour. It was a remarkable narrative of God's dealings with him and work through him. On Monday morning his address to the missionaries was long and impressive. We cannot soon forget the visit. In George Müller our ideal of what a Christian man should be seems to have found a striking realisation.

'I am glad you have heard Beecher. Mr. Simon calls him a *teacher*. In this estimate Mr. Simon is, I think, wrong. I cannot look upon Beecher as a great *teacher*. I am sure he is talking a great deal of nonsense in England these days. His heart is, however, sound through and through. He is a great preacher unquestionably, and his visit to England ought to do good. But it is devoutly to be hoped that young preachers will not begin to ape Henry Ward Beecher. That would be a great calamity. You are quite right in your estimate of Beecher's prayers. I felt the same whenever I heard him talk to God. He seemed to me to get very near to God, and to have the power of carrying his congregation with him; and that is a gift which very few possess in anything like a large degree.'

A few months later, in 1887, he wrote again:—

'I see you have Dr. George MacDonald with you. His sermons, as they have been coming out in the

Christian World Pulpit, I have read with much interest. He is at the heart of things, and in his case one feels that it is a big, deep heart dealing with them. I need not ask if you have read *The Gifts of the Child Christ*, by him. I have just read it through, and have found it a gem. What a beautiful thing the human mind is when it is beautiful. And how beautiful God's mind must be, for all these beautiful things come from that fountain.'

Another letter written before the close of the same year contains a passage of deep interest, as it reveals the worker at the fountain of truth and revelation, and finding new inspiration and strength in a new vision of God's great saving purpose. The doctrine of the immanence of the Spirit of God in the world, and of His universal gracious witness in the heart and life of man, in preparation for the fuller revelation and the richer spiritual influence associated with the Gospel, has become a source of light and encouragement to many a worker for God since it has come into prominence and has been more clearly apprehended by the Church. For workers among the heathen especially this aspect of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is one of peculiar value, bringing the strength and inspiration of renewed hope when the heart is weary and depressed. Dr. John writes:—

'HANKOW, *December* 27, 1887.

'The subject on which my mind has been dwelling of late is God's sympathy with man in his weakness and sin. I preached the other Sunday on the text,

"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity," and the subject has been on my mind ever since. The idea of the Great Spirit being always and everywhere present as the sympathising friend and helper of man has laid hold of my mind with new power. I used to think of the missionary going, and taking the Spirit with him where he went. Now I think of the Spirit as being already there, and inviting the missionary to come and join Him in the work. The Spirit was in China before I was born, and He brought me in to be a co-worker with Himself. And so everywhere and always. What would have become of the world but for the presence of the Divine Spirit in it? People seem to think that the heathen world has been without God all these centuries. The heathen, it is true, have not known God, but God has known them all the time. The measure of men's knowledge of God is not the measure of what God is to men. If God had not been in China, China would have been a hell. What keeps a man from becoming a demon? Is it not the presence of the Spirit in his soul? I have had more tenderness of soul in dealing with men ever since this truth has been brought home to me by God's Spirit. How thankful ought we to be that hard theological views and dogmas are giving way, and that the Spirit of Christ is coming in and quietly taking their place. The one precious thing in God's universe is love, and it is the divinest thing in the heart of man. Blessed be God, no one can rob us of Christ, and no one can separate us from the love of Christ. As long as we have Christ and His precious love, we are rich in the

one thing that is of any value in the sight of God. Christ is drawing men to Himself everywhere, and by and by He will draw all men. May He become a greater power in our lives and in the lives of all His people.'

The more thorough evangelisation of the province of Hupeh occupied Dr. John's thoughts a good deal at this time. Notwithstanding the progress which the Mission had made—or perhaps it would be more correct to say, in consequence of the progress the Mission had made—the need for a large increase in the number of workers seemed very urgent. 'You have no idea,' he wrote to Mr. Jacob, 'of the way the *knowledge* of the truth is spreading over the land. Everywhere now you meet with men who know the truth, and believe in it also; while some years ago it was a rare thing to find a man away from the ports who had read a book or heard a sermon.'

The opportunity and claim presented by such facts as these pressed heavily on the heart of the great missionary. His own literary labours in connection with the Central China Tract and Book Society were largely responsible for the wide diffusion of the knowledge of Christianity, and he longed to see the fruits gathered in to the Church of Christ. Some years before he had, in his eagerness for the evangelisation of Hupeh, elaborated a scheme for the employment of a number of European missionaries. There had been grave objections to this, which had caused its rejection by the Directors of his Society. Now he approached them

afresh, with a proposal for the establishment of an auxiliary mission, to consist entirely of self-supporting missionaries. In this he was joined by his colleague the Rev. Arnold Foster, who was already an honorary member of the Mission. This scheme, however, also came to nothing, because the men who were wanted could not be got. Some paragraphs in the letter in which he first broached his scheme are worth preserving:—

'(1) For many years, as you know, I have given a good deal of thought to the question as to how to get this province evangelised. The idea of getting out a number of men on a lower salary held possession of my mind for some time. Ultimately I gave this idea up as not workable. I don't think the plan of dividing your men into the two classes of high-salaried and low-salaried would ever work. If you could bring all the missionaries down, it would be all right. But that you cannot do. Besides, I do not think it would be *right* on your part to attempt it. The unmarried men are not getting *too* much. The married missionaries are getting less in proportion, and *need* every farthing of their salary. But if college men and university men *need* the high salary, how can you very well ask others to take less?

'(2) Having given up this idea, I began to cast about for another. About a year or two ago the thought of establishing a self-supporting mission in connection with the London Missionary Society occurred to me. But I had one difficulty to face, namely, that in order to start such a mission I must be

a self-supporting missionary myself. At that time I did not see my way to take this step, and was consequently compelled to let the scheme simmer. Some months since, I was led to think over the matter seriously again. It seemed to me that God had made it *possible* for me to take the step, and that it was my duty to go forward. I spoke to Mr. Foster about it for the first time, and asked him if he would join. Mr. F. was very much delighted with the idea, and expressed his readiness to go in for the scheme most heartily.

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'My principal idea in offering to become a self-supporting missionary just now, is this: I wish to move the hearts of men and women at home who have the means of supporting themselves to come out and join me in the great work of evangelising this province. Should I succeed, the Society will be helped very considerably, and the missionary work in China will be greatly benefited.'

The period from 1891 to the present time may fairly be regarded as the dawn of a new era in China, a period marked by violent convulsions, and then by changes of startling extent and rapidity. In the Hankow Mission, also, the year 1891 was the beginning of important changes and developments, by which the methods of the Mission have been steadily modernised to meet the requirements of the new era.

On Sunday, March 22, the Margaret Memorial Hospital for women was opened. As already men-

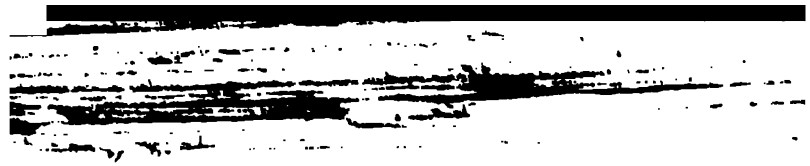
tioned, the building was erected mainly at the cost of Dr. John himself, as a memorial of his first wife, the brave and tender companion of his early days of pioneering in China. It contained one large ward with ten beds, a small private ward, an isolation ward, an operating-room, a sitting-room for patients, and bedroom and parlour for the Chinese matron.

The opening of this hospital was the means of breaking down the objection to the employment of lady missionaries in Hankow. It was speedily found that a woman doctor would have a freedom in dealing with the Chinese women patients which was not possible for a man, and that a sphere of most valuable influence in the homes of patients would be open to her. The next year, therefore, saw the appointment of the first lady medical missionary in Central China connected with the London Missionary Society. There are now a lady doctor and a qualified lady nurse in Hankow, the same in Wuchang, and a lady nurse in Hiau-Kan.

In the month following the opening of the hospital, a conference of evangelists and deacons connected with the native Church was held, which was also the sign of the beginning of a new stage of profound significance in the development of the Mission. There is no question of more serious importance for the permanent strength and the healthy expansion of the native Church than the training of the native ministry. In the early days of a mission, helpers are necessarily employed without any special training. Where all are ignorant, earnest and intelligent men, who have



CONFERENCE OF EVANGELISTS OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY IN CENTRAL CHINA, MAY 1905.



some clear knowledge of the great fundamental truths of the Gospel, can do a great and valuable work as evangelists. But as the number of the converts increases, as the Bible gets into the hands of the people, and the Church is organised, and questions are asked, and difficulties arise, it becomes absolutely necessary that the leaders of the Church should be trained men. In such a country as China especially, if the Christian Church is to be really strong and influential for good among all classes of the community, the training for the Christian ministry will have to be broad, comprehensive, and thorough. This gathering of preachers and deacons connected with the Mission in Hankow was the first clear evidence that the Christian community was emerging from the elementary stage into a more settled and intelligent life. Dr. John wrote: 'From the very commencement of our work in Hankow, the missionaries have not been unmindful of the importance of giving their native helpers a good Bible training, but of late it has been felt that special and more systematic efforts should be put forth with this object in view.'

The Rev. T. M. Morris, of Ipswich, one of a deputation to China from the Baptist Missionary Society, happened to be at Hankow at the time of the meeting. He was present at the opening reception, and gave an address.

After this the Conference met three or four times a day. Regular lectures were given by the Rev. A. Foster on Pastoral Theology, by the Rev. W. Owen on Prophecy, by the Rev. C. G. Sparham on

Geography, and by Dr. John on Biblical Exegesis. One lecture was also given by Dr. Gillison on Physiology, and one by Mr. Sparham on the Mission to the South Seas.

The instruction given was greatly appreciated. It seemed to open the eyes of all to an entirely new vision of the Christian revelation of God. Dr. John's lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews especially opened up to them vistas of truth which they had never dreamed of, much less explored. Three of the sessions were for conversation on practical questions. Of these, and of the general result of the Conference, Dr. John wrote:—

'HANKOW, *May* 1-4, 1891.

'The three sittings for the discussion of native customs were full of deep interest to us all. Among the subjects discussed by us the following stood out prominently: the practice of usury, opium-smoking, gambling, theatre-going, foot-binding, early betrothals, ancestral worship, funeral and wedding rites and customs. We wanted to get at the real nature of these customs and practices, and to find out the views entertained by our native helpers as to the attitude which the converts should assume in regard to them. They were encouraged to speak out their minds fully and freely, and not allow themselves to be influenced in the least by the presence of the missionaries or the opinions supposed to be held by them. All that we did was to draw them out, and thus get at their real thoughts.

'In this we succeeded beyond my expectations. We

were soon made to feel that we were dealing with men who had thought for themselves on all practical subjects connected with Christian work, and who had arrived at clear views, and possessed deep convictions on every point. On every point they seemed to us to be thoroughly sound in principle and resolute in purpose. They expressed themselves as utterly opposed to any compromise with idolatry and superstition of every kind. On the question of ancestral worship they were perfectly clear. Whilst they urged the importance of attending to the graves of their ancestors, they denounced ancestral worship in every shape and form. They would have nothing to do with candles, incense, fire-crackers, or any such things at the marriage ceremony. Some of these things they admitted might be regarded as innocent in themselves; but they maintained that they are so closely associated with idolatry that nothing but evil could spring from their toleration in the Christian Church in China at this stage of its progress. On gambling, opium-smoking, theatre-going, and kindred practices, they expressed themselves in terms which would have delighted the hearts of our Puritan Fathers. "We will have none of these things." Such was the language of one and all. They confessed the evil of early betrothals, but could suggest no remedy in the present social condition of China. They condemned the habit of foot-binding, but they did not express themselves as sanguine of any great change with regard to it in the immediate future. They promised to do what they can to set a good example to the Christians, and gave it as their opinion that the

time had come for bringing the matter prominently before the churches. As the result of our conversation on this unnatural habit, the feet of two little girls have been set free. This is a good beginning, and we are very thankful for it. The habit, though cruel, is deeply rooted in a national taste as universal as it is depraved, and it will take ages to root it out. As Christianity wins its way in the land, this habit, like all other unnatural habits, must yield to its benign influence and pass away; but it will linger long and die hard. There are missionaries who would proceed at once to legislate on the subject; but I am convinced that the time is not come to adopt so drastic a measure. The right thing for the present is to try and create a Christian consciousness in regard to the matter among our converts, by bringing it often before their notice, and by inducing the stronger men among them to face the difficulty and take the lead. We had a very interesting conversation on the duty and privilege of Sabbath keeping, the healthful result of which will, we trust, be seen and felt in the days to come.

'Of these seventeen men, preachers and deacons, there is not one in whose Christian character we do not feel the utmost confidence, not one who does not command our love and esteem, not one of whom we are not justly proud. The days we have spent in close association and fellowship have only deepened our respect and affection for them. They have endeared themselves to us and to each other as they never did before.

'But we all feel that they need more instruction,

instruction more continuous and systematic in the word of God and in various branches of useful knowledge. It is our intention to hold these conferences twice a year, and thus do what we can to help them on. But even this will not meet their needs and the requirements of the work. The time is coming, and it is not far distant, when the Hankow Mission will be compelled to take into serious consideration a scheme for the thorough training of native agents. Our minds are working towards this point, and no doubt we shall reach it sooner or later.

'Oh that I were only just beginning my missionary life! I have come to the close of it, and all the work seems to be still before me. Nothing has been done as compared with what remains to be done.'

In another letter Dr. John refers again to the thought expressed in the last paragraph:—

'My impression is that ere long the Hankow Mission will be forced to establish an institution for the regular training of native assistants as preachers, evangelists, and pastors, and that the institution will have to be established on a basis broad enough to take in both departments—the medical and theological. I should be greatly delighted to see such an institution in connection with our Mission. We have just had a glorious Conference with our native helpers, and we are feeling now as we never felt before that we must go in for the systematic teaching and training of these fine men whom God has given us.'

Missionary societies are, unfortunately, seldom in

a position to provide for the future by meeting such needs before they actually become pressing. It was thirteen years before the Theological School Dr. John desired was provided. Then the building was erected and paid for by himself, and furnished by his friends, as a gift to the Mission. It was dedicated to the service of God on April 18, 1904, during the visit to Hankow of a deputation from the London Missionary Society. Dr. John's gift is a handsome two-storey red-brick building, with verandah on four sides. It contains lecture hall capable of seating two hundred, library and class-rooms and dormitories, with accommodation for sixty students.

It is the unexpected that always happens in China, and the truth of this statement was never more painfully illustrated than during 1891. While the Christian churches were steadily growing in numbers, and work was progressing on every hand with every appearance of peace and good-will, forces of evil were silently at work over a very wide area in the Yang-tse valley, in the hope of stamping out Christianity and driving away the foreigner. The first riots occurred during the month of May at Chin-kiang, Nanking, and other places far down the river. Then a riot broke out at I-chang, 400 miles above Hankow, in which the Consulate, the Presbyterian Mission premises, and other foreign property was destroyed, and the Europeans escaped with difficulty. It became evident that the whole region of the Yang-tse was in an unsettled state. In response to indignant remonstrances and appeals from the ministers of the various foreign Powers, an



THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE, ERECTED 1902–1903, OPENED APRIL 18, 1904.



Imperial edict was issued in June or July, which was remarkably liberal and friendly as compared with anything which had been said by the Chinese Government before. This edict strongly condemned the evil-disposed persons who were causing riots. The rights of the missionaries to reside and to pursue their calling in the country were stated and insisted on, and also the right of converts to Christianity to enjoy freedom and the protection of the magistrates in the profession of their faith. The character of the Christian teaching was referred to in highly commendatory terms, and the governors of all the provinces in which there had been trouble were commanded to put down all disturbances, and adequately to punish all who promoted them.

This edict was made public everywhere, and was posted up in prominent places in all the cities. It was at first hoped that it would have the effect of stopping the disturbances. It soon, however, became evident that this would not be the case, and that an agitation was going on which was inflaming public opinion so generally and so seriously that there would be a great catastrophe before long. Violent anti-Christian literature, consisting largely of scurrilous and blasphemous illustrated placards and broadsheets, had been circulated freely throughout Hunan for years. It had reached Hupeh, and to some extent was affecting other provinces.

Dr. John's intimate knowledge and long experience led him at once to the conclusion that the agitation was begun and maintained in official quarters, and he obtained information from his native friends which enabled him ultimately to trace the whole vile plot to

its source. He promptly communicated his information to the newspapers as well as to the British and other foreign authorities. It was largely as the result of his energetic action that the Government took measures to have the mischief stopped at the fountain-head. Meanwhile, however, the situation was for a time very serious. On September 7, 1891, he wrote to the Foreign Secretary of the Society :—

'Once more we are brought face to face with a great crisis in China. A plot has been laid to drive out all foreigners at once from the valley of the Yang-tse, and ultimately from the whole of China. The home of this plot is the province of Hunan. The Hunanese have been planning with this end in view for years, and they are now busily engaged in working it out. A conclave was held in Wuchang last week, at the head of which were influential Hunan men. The resolution come to was that no foreigner shall be allowed to dwell in the provinces of Hunan, Hupeh, and Kiang-Si. "The Hunanese," they say, "have only to utter one growl in order to make the foreigners skedaddle." They are confident in their strength, and they mean death and destruction to the foreigner. The I-chang riot is an illustration of what they can do. An hour before the riot broke out Mr. Cockburn had not the least suspicion of danger. It was a thunderbolt from a clear sky. Yesterday morning a placard was found in the compound of the Roman Catholic mission in Wuchang, and another in the compound of our mission there, warning the foreigners of the coming storm. We are enjoying perfect peace so far; but the I-chang

affair makes us feel that we are sitting on a volcano. We know not what a day may bring forth.'

Three weeks later he wrote again :—

'We have had no further trouble since the I-chang riot; but the state of feeling among the people is by no means satisfactory. The people themselves are apprehensive of danger, and it is the opinion of many among them that it is the presence of the gunboats alone that prevents an outbreak. Our Consul's advice to us all just now is to confine our work to the ports, and not to move about the country much. Much will depend, so far as the immediate future is concerned, upon the action of the foreign Powers.

'Our great enemy is the Chinese official. The higher officials are not sincere, and the lower officials act, of course, as is most pleasing to the higher. This is my view, as it is Mr. Gardner's also. What it may all lead to, it is impossible to say. But I sincerely believe that nothing but a most determined policy on the part of the foreign Powers will put matters right.'

'*September* 29.

'In the midst of these troubles we have much to be thankful for. The elements of danger at Wuchang and Hankow are many, but we have been graciously preserved so far. We owe much to the fact that we have a strong man in the Viceroy. We do not suppose that he has any particular love for us. In fact, we know that he is anti-foreign to the backbone; but he knows that it is to his own interest as well as the interest of his country to keep things quiet at this

important centre. We owe much to the presence of foreign gunboats at the port. If two weeks ago there had been no foreign gunboats here, we should have had, in all probability, an outbreak. Things looked very threatening, and the natives themselves were expecting an uproar. Some of them declared that if the gunboats left they would leave too. Then we owe a great deal to H.B.M. Consul, C. T. Gardner, Esq. He has displayed great courage, tact, and ability in the management of affairs since the beginning of these riots. He has shown the deepest interest in the welfare of all, and genuine sympathy with the sufferers. Above all, are we indebted to God for His loving care and constant watchfulness. "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."'

It was rumoured in Hankow that the storm centre was in Chang-sha, and that some high official was the moving spirit; but it was not until October that any definite clue was obtained. In that month Dr. John was on one of his brief itinerating journeys, and at Hwang-pi he saw a copy of a letter from Chou Han to the Governor of Hupeh. This gave the anxiously-sought-for clue to the person who was chiefly responsible for writing and providing the cost of the campaign. Dr. John followed it up, and was able to discover the name of the publishing houses in Chang-sha which printed and sent out the literature.

It is not expedient that the missionary should be constantly meddling in local politics; but there are times when considerations of the public credit or the

public safety compel him to lay aside his reserve and express his views. Such a crisis had been reached in Central China. Dr. John felt that this was more than a question of missions and missionaries; the future relations of China to the world and the safety of every foreigner in China depended upon the prompt and resolute stopping of such an agitation as this. He therefore said so clearly and forcibly, and supported his statement by the evidence which he had gathered. Mr. Gardner, H.M. Consul at Hankow, was one who knew and valued the missionary; he supported Dr. John's representations with all the weight of his official position. The result was that the Court of Peking was compelled to take decisive action. Chou Han was degraded from office, and the circulation of the mischievous literature was effectually stopped.

The poison, however, was not at once eradicated from the public mind. The year 1892 was one of great unrest. In 1893 two Swedish missionaries were murdered at Sung-pu, sixty miles from Hankow, and there were anti-foreign riots in many parts of China. Then followed a time of quiet and of official friendliness during the Japanese War; but the war was no sooner over than troubles began again. The year 1895 saw the whole of Sze-Chuen aflame against the foreigner; and though all the missionaries escaped, there was wholesale destruction of property in Chentu and thirty other places, and the native Christians, Protestant and Catholic, suffered severely. In the same year occurred the terrible massacre at Kucheng in the Fuh-Kien province, when eleven Europeans, men,

women, and children, were, without the slightest warning, brutally murdered. All these troubles had one common feature and significance: they were not only connived at, they were actually inspired by men in high places, and had the scarcely concealed sanction of authority.

Dr. John's public-spirited and successful efforts to trace and expose the source of the anti-foreign feeling which was becoming so serious a cause of anxiety were freely recognised and appreciated outside mission circles, and many expressions of gratitude appeared in the press. One of the most striking of these was in a letter written to the *North China Daily News* by M. Bryois, a prominent French journalist in Shanghai, who expressed the views of his countrymen, and was evidently made the spokesman of the opinions of the Roman Catholic clergy. The letter is too long to quote in full, but the following paragraphs will be read with interest:—

'Le révérend John est un savant docteur, un érudit sinologue, qu'une existence entière d'homme, passée dans ces régions extrême-orientales, un labeur énorme, un esprit observateur et philosophique, et la pratique continuelle de tous les dialectes du peuple chinois, ont rendu particulièrement apte et compétent pour donner un avis sérieux sur les graves questions qui nous préoccupent. Son jugement est pondéré, grave, logique. Ses pensées sont nettes, claires, traduites dans une langue pure, simple, mais dont la simplicité n'exclut pas la richesse, parfois.

'Mais, à côté de l'écrivain, de l'homme érudit et

du penseur profond, il y a, chez le révérend John, le missionnaire brave et résolu, qui connaît tous ses devoirs et prétend les accomplir jusqu'au bout. Son œuvre de prosélytisme, sa mission de propagande chrétienne, sa charité de pasteur, ne vont pas jusqu'à abdiquer sa "nationalité d'Européen"; car nous ne sommes ni Anglais, ni Allemands, ni Français en Chine; il y a comme une fusion de tous les groupes d'Europe et de la race blanche, unis dans un même intérêt de défense. . . .

'Je ne saurais terminer ce long article, sans citer l'appréciation que me faisait du docteur Griffith John, il y a quelques jours, un célèbre jésuite de Zi-ka-wey, le père Heude, dont le réputation de savant est universelle: "Je ne connais pas M. Griffith John personnellement. Je ne l'ai jamais vu. Mais ses écrits, sa courageuse campagne, la netteté de ses vues, la bravoure de ses affirmations, mille autres qualités d'écrivain et d'homme, me le font admirer et aimer. Mon opinion est désintéressée, nous ne servons pas, lui et moi, la même cause de prosélytisme. Il est pasteur protestant, je suis prête catholique. Et néanmoins, je ne puis m'empêcher de dire, parceque c'est la vérité, que le brave docteur a plus fait, dans sa campagne d'homme seul, et par ses écrits, que tous nos diplomates assemblés à Pékin avec leurs ultimatums, qui ne portent guère, et dont les pointes sont singulièrement emoussées. Griffith John a plaidé, plus éloquemment et plus courageusement que quiconque ne l'a su faire, la grande cause des étrangers en Chine."'

Such troubles could not fail to affect mission work

somewhat, and at one time the Consul deemed it necessary to ask all missionaries in outlying places to come into Hankow and to suspend itineration in the country districts for a while. Yet it is evident that at least within the sphere of regular Christian work people did not join heartily or generally in the agitation. In his report of the work of the year 1891 Dr. John says:—

'We have much to be thankful for as we look back upon the experiences of the year. We passed through a period of danger and trial; but not a particle of the London Missionary Society's property was destroyed anywhere, and not a person injured in any way. Our work was somewhat interfered with by the alarming rumours which kept floating about for several months. Our hospital has never been so empty, and the schools have been a great deal deserted. For some months travelling was not deemed safe, and the out-stations have been somewhat neglected in consequence. The daily and Sunday congregations, however, kept up well, and we carried on the preaching with as much ardour as ever. As a matter of prudence, we did not open the chapels in the evenings; but in no other respect did the riots interfere with the daily preaching at the chapels. The Sunday congregations, as you are aware, are made up of converts, and you will be pleased to hear that they have never been better attended than they were during the whole of last year. I saw no falling off whatever. With one or two exceptions our converts came through the fiery trial splendidly. We all feel proud of the courage and steadfastness which

they evinced in the midst of circumstances which tended so much to try their faith and patience.'

There is also an interesting letter from Dr. John to the Society written before the troubles were over, and illustrative of the buoyant and confident spirit which has made him so helpful a leader, in which he refers to the condition of the work :—

'Let me mention two or three facts which have greatly cheered my heart these days. Being facts connected with our work, they cannot fail to interest you also.

'Our daily congregations have been exceedingly good in spite of all the adverse influences with which we have had to contend of late. The chapels have been opened daily, and the preaching has been carried on without interruption. The attendance has kept up well, and the hearers have never listened better.

'Our Sunday congregations have been excellent. The converts have shown no lack of courage either here or in the country. On last Communion Sunday eight adults and one child were baptized. Every Sunday afternoon the hospital chapel is well filled, and the joy of preaching has been very great. Last Sunday afternoon was given to the examination of the Sunday school. The place was well filled, and every one seemed to be in good spirits. The converts were examined in the Book of Exodus. It would have done your heart good to have heard the answers given to the questions put by the examiner. Four chapters were recited by grown-up men, of whom one is a mandarin of the sixth rank. Thus you will see that

these riots and commotions have not interfered materially with the religious life of our Church or with the daily preaching. The hospitals, however, have felt their effect greatly, and so have the schools in a measure.

'You are aware that the missionaries of the Scotch Mission at I-chang have had to leave for a time. The work has been left entirely in the hands of Mr. Fung, Mr. Liu, and Mr. Niu, the three native evangelists. Being members of the London Mission at Hankow I hear from them constantly. Mr. Fung has written me twice, and both letters have greatly cheered my heart. He, together with the other evangelists, have had much to try them since the missionaries left; but they have been holding the fort splendidly. The Christians meet for worship regularly, though reviled and threatened by the rowdies of the place. About forty boys and more than ten girls still attend the day schools. Mr. Fung writes: "God is caring for us. Don't be anxious about us. Continue to remember us in your prayers." If you could realise the situation you would join me in praising God for raising up at Hankow such men as these. Mr. Fung is naturally a very timid man, and any courage he has must come from a consciousness of Christ's presence with him.

'A fact of great interest came before me on Saturday last. You have heard a great deal about Hunan lately. Well, we have, even in Hunan, some genuine Christians. A Hunan man named Tab-Kwangtah was baptized at Hankow in 1876. Soon after his baptism he left Hankow for his native city in the west of Hunan, and he has never been here since. For a year or two he

wrote us occasionally, but for more than twelve years no letter was received from him, and he had passed out of our minds. On Saturday last I received a letter from him, reminding me of the fact that he was baptized at Hankow in 1876, and asking me to supply him with a New Testament, a hymn-book, and any other Christian books that might be helpful to him. His story is that his boat had capsized, that all his books, including his copy of the New Testament, were lost, and that he was very anxious to get another copy. Is it not cheering to get such a letter as that in the midst of the present trials? Think of a native Christian all alone in that hostile province, feeding on the word of God, and thus maintaining his Christian life for fifteen years without any human help, never writing to his pastor till his New Testament was lost, and then from sheer hunger writing for a new supply!

'On Saturday I received a letter from a convert away in Kiang-Si province, many hundreds of miles distant from Hankow, named Yang Shan-hien. He was baptized here some years since, and soon after his baptism he left for his native province. We had lost sight of him, and knew not whether he was dead or alive, or, if alive, whether he still maintained the integrity of his Christian profession. Last year missionaries of the Inland Mission visited his native town. Mr. Yang made himself known to them as a Christian, and identified himself with them. Mr. Lawson wrote me to ask whether the man was really connected with us, at the same time speaking very highly of him. I wrote Mr. Lawson telling him that Mr. Yang was one

of our converts, and was baptized on the 6th of September 1885. In the letter just received Mr. Yang gives me some account of himself; but what cheers me most is the testimony which Mr. Lawson heard as to his Christian character. Mr. Lawson writes: "I am very thankful for the information you gave me regarding Mr. Yang. The Lord is truly working in his soul. I may say I have not engaged him; I would rather wait awhile and allow him to testify at home, which, I think, will be best."

'One fact more. We had a tremendous fire in Hankow on Saturday night, which almost touched our chapel in the Kia street. From one to two thousand houses were burnt to the ground, about three thousand families were driven from house and home, and several of our converts were among the sufferers. At the close of our church meeting on Sunday morning I walked up to each to express my sympathy with them in their trial. One of them had lost two houses, the rent of which has been his main support for years. Before I could speak a word to him the old man lifted up his hands and said: "Venerable pastor, it is all right. The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away. God is perfectly just and good. Blessed be the name of the Lord." He then told me how the Christians had come to his help, and how a good deal of his furniture, clothes, etc., had thus been saved. He seemed to think more of God's goodness in sending him this help than of the great loss which had befallen him. In the afternoon he was at the examination of the Sunday school, and no one showed a more thorough knowledge of the

Scriptures than he did. In fact, I had to pay him a compliment in the presence of all, and hold him up as an example to all.'

In the following year a new and handsome chapel was opened in Hankow, and two missionaries settled in the city of Hiau-Kan, and thus completed the occupation of that large district. The native evangelists were able to report steady growth in various directions, and a new district was occupied which was destined in 1896 to be the centre of further permanent work by the settlement of two missionaries at Tsao Shih.

CHAPTER XIX

HUNAN

THE story of the Hunanese convert in the letter just quoted is one of the many references to his thought about Hunan which at this time began to appear in Dr. John's correspondence, and which found expression in the following letter to the Foreign Secretary of the Society :—

'*September* 14, 1891.

'What about the future? I have no doubt in my mind that the result will be the further opening of this country to the Gospel. I believe that Hunan is going to be opened, and that I shall be in Chang-sha before I die. I have prayed for this long, and I am confident God is going to answer my prayer. This I want you to look upon as settled and fixed; and I want you also to be prepared for the good time coming.'

In the report sent home at the beginning of 1893 Dr. John wrote :—

'Ten of the Hunanese have joined our church within the last twelve months, and there are some fine fellows among them. Chou Han's quondam cook is one of the

ten. A great many Hunan men have been coming about us of late. They are influenced by a great variety of motives, and it requires no little experience and insight in dealing with them. It is now over a year since I became acquainted with the name of Teng Meu Hwa, one of the three publishing firms in Chang-sha employed by Chou Han in his anti-foreign crusade. The eldest son of the firm is now at Hankow, reading Christian books and attending Christian services. The first time he visited me he was very timid and sceptical. He was introduced by one of the Hunan Christians, and, according to my custom, I ordered tea for both. The Christian soon drained the cup. Mr. Teng, however, never touched it, and I learnt afterwards that he was under the delusion that it might contain some grain of the *bewitching medicine* which is supposed to be used by the missionaries in making converts. Mr. Teng has called on me once and again since, and I am glad to be able to say that all his fears are gone, and that his faith in my tea has been thoroughly established. He would like to be baptized, but we are not quite so sure of his faith in the Gospel, and think it best to put him on a long probation.

'We are looking wistfully in the direction of Hunan. A great change for the better has come over Chang-sha, the capital. There are three or four of our converts in the city at present, and they are sending me very cheerful accounts of the state of things there. They meet together at the house of Brother Siao for worship, sell Christian books in the streets, and speak freely at the tea-shops about Christ and His salvation. I have

just received a letter from one of these converts, and he tells me that they are carrying on the work quite openly, and selling books at the rate of about five hundred cash worth per day. At no former period in the history of Chang-sha could this kind of work be carried on within its walls.'

The province of Hunan was for many years the stronghold of Chinese conservatism. When all the other provinces of the Empire had opened their gates to the settlement of the foreigner, it still refused to have anything to do with him. We have already seen how Dr. John and his companions were treated on their first two attempts to enter the province. Though two or three heroic missionaries of the China Inland Mission, notably Mr. Adam Dorward, who for years had been seeking to carry the Gospel to Hunan, had been more successful in pioneer journeys, no one had been allowed to remain as a permanent resident in any city in the province. Yet it was a province worth winning for Christ. Its population of 21,000,000 had a reputation in China for their strong, energetic, and independent character. 'Everywhere Hunan men are to be seen occupying the very highest positions as civil and military officers'; and the material resources of the province are such that the people are prosperous and wealthy.

'The opening of Hunan,' said Dr. John in 1891, 'will tell powerfully on the whole Empire, and especially on the temper of the people in all the surrounding region. It will also greatly further the missionary enterprise in China. We have a number of Hunan

men among our converts, and they are, taking them all in all, the finest specimens we can boast of.'

The longed-for opening and change did not come at once, nor did it come without persecution often renewed. Two things, however, have been strikingly evident: the opening of Hunan to the Gospel has been very largely due to the faith, courage, and the character of Hunanese Christian workers; and the liberality of Hunanese Christians has been conspicuous.

At the close of 1892 three of the Hunanese converts, who were natives of Chang-sha, found their way to their native city with a supply of Testaments and Christian literature. To the work of circulating and speaking about this literature they devoted themselves. They found a ready sale for their books, and willing ears for their message, among the people; but they had not been there many days before the magistrates and high officials took alarm, and they were ordered out of the city. Delaying to go, they were turned out by force, and were compelled to find their way back to Hankow with the story of their defeat.

One of those who took part in this pioneering effort was Mr. Peng Lan-Seng, to whose energy, tact, and devotion the development of Christian work in the cities of the Siang valley has been very largely due. Mr. Peng's life-story was told by Dr. John in the pages of the *Missionary Chronicle* in February 1900. It furnishes a further striking illustration of the strength and quality of Christian character which may be expected in the Church of Christ in China, and will probably, before many years have passed, make the

Chinaman as enterprising and successful a missionary among other races as he is now trader and settler. Dr John says:—

'Ten years ago Mr. Peng Lan-Seng was not only a heathen, but, like most of his fellow-provincials, bitterly anti-foreign and anti-Christian. He thoroughly believed in the bewitching power of Christianity, and had a wholesome dread of entering a missionary's house or chapel, lest he might be turned into a "foreign devil." The missionary's tea and cake he regarded as poison, and dared not touch either. He was a thorough believer in the old Hunan story about the inhumanity of the foreigner and the bestiality of the foreign religion.

'Mr. Peng was also a notoriously bad man. He is never weary of telling people the story of his conversion; and when he does so, he never fails to remind his hearers that of all the sinners in China he himself was the chief. About three years ago Mr. Teng, a native of Chang-sha, and the publisher of Chou Han's books, was in my study. Among other things he told me this interesting story: "I want to tell you," said he, "what has brought me to Hankow. I have come to see what it is that has worked such a change in Peng Lan-Seng. He is a native of Chang-sha, and an old comrade of mine. He used to be the worst man in Chang-sha; but he has given up all his bad habits, and is now a new man. When I ask him the reason for this great change, he tells me that it is the Gospel that has done it; and I have come down in order to find out the truth about this matter."

'When, in 1892, Mr. Peng presented himself as a candidate, we all—the native helpers and the foreign missionaries—stood in great doubt of the man. Many rumours reached us about his past life, which made us hesitate to admit him into our communion. He waited, and waited long. When at last he was admitted, some of us had grave doubts as to the wisdom of the step. Some were strongly in favour of prolonging the time of probation.

'No sooner was Mr. Peng admitted than he began to work for Christ. He was ever to be found at the Kia-Kiai chapel, preaching away with all his might. Some of us felt that it was somewhat early for him to begin to exercise his gifts in this particular way, and that it would be well to put a stop to his preaching. But Mr. Peng was irrepressible. Preach he must, and preach he would. Very soon the salvation of Hunan became the centre of his thoughts. He began by working for the Hunanese in and around Hankow. His prayers on behalf of Hunan in those days were something indescribable. They were impassioned pleadings with God on behalf of his own people—his kindred according to the flesh. The missionaries of other missions were very much struck with them, and would sometimes speak of them as the thing of the meeting. Mr. Peng is a thorough believer in prayer. A gentleman of the place invited Mr. Peng, Mr. Sparham, and myself to a feast yesterday. There were several others there, and among them a nephew of the Viceroy, Chang Chih-tung. Mr. Peng gave them the story of his conversion and subsequent trials. It

was most graphically told. "I tell you what it is," he said in conclusion, "if a man wants to be a genuine Christian, he must *pray*, and he must pray till the tears flow from his eyes and the perspiration runs down his back. That has been my experience."'

For some time Mr. Peng devoted himself to the evangelisation of his Hunanese countrymen entirely as a voluntary worker. In 1895 he was asked to become a colporteur in Hunan, and amidst many perils he and his colleague were greatly blessed.

Towards the close of 1896 the two colporteurs returned to Hankow from a long trip, and among their other news they told of a little company of Christians in Heng-Chow who had sent through them an invitation to Dr. John to visit them and form them into a church.

The story of the beginning of the Christian Church at Heng-Chow is worth repeating. Dr John wrote, after the visit he paid to the city in response to the invitation sent him:—

'A word with regard to Wang Lien-King, the founder of the church at Heng-Chow. A few years since a young man was baptized at Hankow. He was at the time in the employ of a Hunan official at this place. Soon after his baptism the choice was placed before him of giving up his situation or renouncing his faith in Christ. Without a moment's hesitation he chose the former, and returned to his native home at Heng-Chow. There he began to work for God at once; and the result of his labours has been the in-gathering of that most interesting little band of

Christians. To meet Mr. Wang at his home was a great joy. He is a young man, and a most earnest and lovable Christian. He is still there, and will, I feel sure, do all in his power to keep the little flock together.'

The visit, which was undertaken in March 1897, in company with the Rev. C. G. Sparham and Mr. Peng, was in some respects a great disappointment. The travellers reached Heng-Chow only to find the city greatly excited in consequence of the visit of Dr. Wolfe, a German scientist, who had preceded them by a few days, and had unfortunately aroused the animosity of the people. Their boat no sooner came within the bounds of the city than they were greeted with showers of stones and mud from a crowd on the bank of the river, who made it impossible for them to land. After a day of great peril, during which their boat was constantly pelted with stones, and the dépôt of the National Bible Society, which had only recently been opened, was utterly destroyed by the mob, they dropped down the river under the protection of a Chinese gunboat, and anchored for the night two miles away. The rest of the story may be more fully told in Dr. John's own words:—

'Now for a story that will cheer your heart. On our arrival at Heng-Chow several converts came to see us; and we were told by Mr. Wang Lien-King, the leader among them, that there were from twenty to thirty candidates for baptism at the place. We felt that we could not leave the place entirely without seeing something more of these neophytes. Having

drifted down the stream about two miles, we ordered the boat to stop for the night. Some of the candidates were with us on board the boat, and others followed. The question of their baptism came up, and it was soon found that it could be solved only in one way. They begged us to baptize them. We called their attention to the circumstances in which they and ourselves were placed, and suggested delay. "You see," we said, "that we cannot protect you in the event of difficulties springing up. We are ourselves driven out of the place, and are helpless to protect ourselves. What could we do for you should an attack be made upon you? Had you not better wait, and seriously count the cost before taking the next step?" "We have waited long," was the reply, "and we cannot allow you to return without baptizing us. We are not afraid of the consequences. Please administer to us the rite of baptism, and admit us into your fellowship." After some consultation with each other, we resolved to comply with their wishes. Some time was spent in examining the candidates. We were delighted to find how well they had been taught by Mr. Wang Lien-King, and were deeply impressed with their evident sincerity. The examination over, we had a service, at which both Mr. Sparham and myself preached for about an hour. Then the rite of baptism was administered to thirteen men. In the circumstances we found it impossible to do anything for the female converts. To allow them to come on board the boat would have been suicidal, and to visit them at their homes was out of the question. Some of the

converts were away in the country, and could not be present.

'It was to us joy unspeakable to admit these thirteen men into our communion. We have many Hunan men in the Church, baptized at Hankow and elsewhere. But these thirteen are, so far as I know, the first baptisms ever witnessed in Hunan itself—that is, in connection with the Protestant Church. It was a glorious ending to a very stormy day. That day, April 6, 1897, I shall never forget, and that evening I can never forget. If there ever has been a Bethel in this world, surely our boat was a Bethel that evening. As to the thirteen men, I feel sure that most of them will stand fire well. The little church at Heng-Chow will take root and grow.

After the service on board the boat, we sat down together to a feast, provided for us by the Heng-Chow Christians. Though we did not eat it at the city, as was originally intended, we ate it in sight of the city.

'"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

'We did not leave our anchorage till the morning of the 8th. We stayed on in the hope that the magistrates would try and put matters right, and ask us to return to the city. We were also anxious to re-open the dépôt, and put a man in charge. This we managed to accomplish. But no invitation to return came, though we did all in our power to procure it. We started early on the 8th, and reached Hankow late

on the 16th, having been away twenty-six days in all, and travelled about 900 English miles.'

Such was the beginning of the church at Heng-Chow. Mr. Peng was sent back shortly after as evangelist to encourage the Christians. He rented a house and converted part of it into a preaching-hall; but the time was not yet quite ripe for the peaceable occupation of Hunan. Within a few months his house was wrecked, and he and his family had to flee, suffering the loss of everything. He had not proceeded many miles down the Siang River before he was overtaken by messengers sent by the magistrates begging him to return. He went back, and though that was not by any means the last riot in the city on account of Christianity, he has worked on with splendid faith and courage, and has made it the centre of a widely extended and remarkable influence.

Dr. John has repeatedly visited Hunan since this memorable occasion in 1897. He went back in the spring of 1899, with the special sanction of H.E. the Viceroy, Chang Chih-tung. On his return he sent home full and most interesting accounts of his experiences, from one of which the following is an extract :—

'The journey itself was in every way a remarkable one. The round trip was 1076 English miles. We travelled 926 miles by water and 150 by land. Thanks to the little steam launch "Li Han," we managed to do it in thirty-two days. There are now several steam launches running between Hankow and Chang-sha, of which the "Li Han" is the largest and fastest. The distance

between Hankow and Chang-sha is nearly 300 miles, and we did it in a little over two days. We made the return trip in less than two days; so the round trip from Hankow to Chang-sha and back did not take us more than four days, whilst in native boats it might have taken us three or four weeks.

'On the journey we were treated with the greatest courtesy and consideration by the local officials. They did all in their power to protect us and make the visit a pleasant one to us. For this we are mainly indebted to the Viceroy, Chang Chih-tung, and to H.B.M. Consul, Pelham L. Warren, Esq. But for the kindness of the Consul in bringing our case before the Viceroy, and the stringent orders sent by the Viceroy to the Hunan officials with regard to our comfort and safety, the journey would have been a very different one. The local authorities, everywhere and always, were all attention, and consequently the people were quiet and inoffensive. In passing from place to place we visited some cities and many towns, and preached to thousands of people. Some of the congregations were very large, and the rowdy element was not always absent; but we encountered no persecutions anywhere, or even trials of any kind.

'This was my fourth visit to Hunan, but the first on which I was not made to feel that my life was in danger. All this is to be ascribed to the friendly bearing of the officials towards us, and the great care they took of us. The eyes of the people are on the officials, and their conduct towards us depends on what they suppose to be the mind and policy of the officials

with regard to us. On this occasion there was no mistaking of the official mind, and hence the friendly attitude of the people.

'The kindness of the evangelists and converts made the journey a very pleasant one to us. The Christians everywhere gave us a right royal reception. The fearlessness, the warmth, and the generosity of the Hunan converts struck us as something remarkable and made a deep impression on our minds. The *multitude* of converts also astonished us; and the character and bearing of very many of them filled our hearts with gratitude and hope. There are strong men among them—men who are sure to occupy a prominent place in the future development of the church in Hunan. Many of them reminded us not so much of the neophyte as of the long-tried and experienced Christian.

'The admission of so large a number of Hunanese to church fellowship added a deep interest to the journey. There were baptized in all 192 persons—adults, 173; non-adults, 19. We might have baptized hundreds more, for there were many hundreds of candidates; but it seemed to us that we could not be too careful in regard to this matter at this initial stage of the work in Hunan. These 173 adult believers were admitted only after a very careful examination, and may be regarded as the very pick of the candidates who came before us.

'Another event of deep interest to us was the setting apart of six evangelists. One was set apart for Chang-sha, one for Siang-tan, one for Heng-shan,

one for Heng-Chow, one for Lei-yang city, and one for Sin-shih-kiai. All of them have been actively engaged in evangelistic work for some time ; but it was on this occasion they were formally set apart for the office. They are good men and tried, and will, we feel sure, do valuable work in their respective spheres. In addition to these six evangelists, four men were set apart for colportage work, and definitely appointed to four definite spheres, which they will visit regularly and work systematically. Their circuits unitedly will cover seven prefectures, all situated in and around our sphere of influence in the Siang valley.'

In addition to the important work of forming churches and arranging for regular ministration to them, property was secured for the use of the Mission in Chang-sha, the provincial capital, Siang-tan, the chief commercial centre, and Heng-Chow.

In October of the same year Dr. John paid another brief visit to Hunan. He only went as far as Yo-Chow, but it was on a very pleasant errand. That city had just been declared an open port, and he went with Mr. Greig, who had been appointed by the London Missionary Society as the first missionary of that Society for Hunan, to secure premises for him and for the medical colleague who was to join him. There had been a wonderful change in the official attitude towards the foreigner and the missionary since his previous visits. Three times he had attempted to visit the city, and three times he had been compelled to retire under conditions of no small peril. Now the veteran missionary was known to be in the sun-

shine of vice-regal favour, and the Government at headquarters was smiling on foreigners, the attitude of all officials was completely changed, and the people welcomed the visitors with enthusiasm.

'Mr. Greig and myself left Hankow on the 26th ult., above half-past five p.m., by the "Wentsing," one of the Viceroy's little steam-boats, and arrived at Yo-Chow on the following afternoon about half-past four. On our arrival we found the landing covered with bunting in honour of the occasion. An official boat came off to take us on shore, and we were carried to our inn in two sedan-chairs, both chairs and bearers having been provided by the district magistrate himself. In course of the evening all the officials sent their cards, with kind inquiries after our health and comfort; and not a few of the most respectable people of the place called on us. The magistrate's grandson, a young man of twenty-six or twenty-seven, was one of the first to come. He gave us a very hearty welcome, and told us that he would do all in his power to make our visit a success. During our stay at the place he called on us several times, and made himself very useful to us in more ways than one.

'The next day we called on all the officials. The district magistrate is the same man who treated Mr. Sparham and myself so rudely in 1887, but completely transformed. He seemed delighted to see us, and treated us with the utmost courtesy and friendliness. On the following day he returned our call, and partook freely of our tea and biscuits. When leaving he expressed himself as delighted with the prospect

of seeing our Mission established at Yo-Chow. The Tau-tai gave us a right royal reception. He and I had met in 1880 at Chang-sha. He recognised me at once, shook me by the hand, and said, "We are old friends." He then took us into a private room, where we found a table covered with a cloth of faultless whiteness, and spread with tempting refreshments in the shape of foreign biscuits and sweetmeats. We had tea served in the foreign style, with milk and sugar. His champagne we did not drink, and his cigars we declined with thanks. His Excellency is a most affable man, and a great talker. We discussed all manner of subjects for about half-an-hour, and parted the best of friends. We called also on the prefect and the grain intendent, from each of whom we received a most cordial reception. The grain intendent had just come down from Chang-sha to arrange about the opening of the new port. He seems to be a man of weight, and we were very glad to have an opportunity of making his acquaintance. Such was our intercourse with the officials, and nothing could have been more satisfactory.

'The people could not have behaved themselves better than they did. No stones were thrown after us, no opprobrious epithets were hurled at us, and no black looks were to be seen anywhere. We walked about in every direction, both inside and outside the city, and found the people perfectly quiet and friendly. On the first day after our arrival we had an escort of two or three soldiers to lead the way and to protect us; but finding that they were not at all needed,

their services were dispensed with during the rest of our stay. Mr. David Jones, one of the American Bible Society's colporteurs, was there at the same time. He was living on board his boat, but carrying on his work on shore. He called on us at our inn, and we met him afterwards in the streets selling the Scriptures. He seemed to be doing his work with perfect immunity from all the annoyances which usually accompany street work in China. When we met him, there was no crowd following, and no excitement whatever was created by his presence.'

In April and May 1901, Hunan was again visited after the dark and stormy interval of the Boxer rising. The modernising of China was illustrated by the fact that Dr. John and his companion were able to go up to Chang-sha 'by one of the ordinary steam-boats running between Hankow and that city.' From thence they were conveyed up to Heng-Chow in the governor's private steam-launch. They visited Chang-sha, Siang-tan, and Heng-Chow, and at each of these places they had enthusiastic receptions and abundant opportunity for preaching to large and attentive audiences, and were filled with joy and gratitude to God as they observed what progress had been made in gathering inquirers and converts. As usual, Dr. John sent a full report of his journey to the Directors, from which only a brief extract can be taken. After describing the extraordinary demonstrations of friendliness on the part of the chief magistrates of Heng-Chow, and also of the people, he says :—

'We moved freely among the people of Heng-

Chow, and were received everywhere with every mark of respect. There was not a black look to be seen nor an angry word to be heard anywhere. We went to see the ground on which our chapel stood before its demolition in July last; and there we found the bare ground and nothing else. There was not a brick to be seen; the whole building had been pulled down, and everything in the shape of materials carted away. We found the same state of things at Heng-shan; and we were told that such is the state of things at all our stations in the Heng-Chow prefecture. The London Missionary Society had in that one prefecture between twenty and thirty places of worship. All, without a single exception, were destroyed last year. In this, as in most things, the Hunanese have shown their thoroughness. They do not do things by halves. You will be pleased to learn that orders to start the work of rebuilding have been given, and that we hope to see all our chapels up before the close of next year. Our chapel and dwelling-houses at Heng-Chow will, we trust, be up before the close of this.

'We saw a great deal of the city on this visit. The whole city was open to our inspection, and we made the best use of our opportunity. We were struck with its size and population, being larger in both respects than we expected to find it. The population cannot be less, we think, than 200,000, it is probably 50,000 more. Looked at from a missionary point of view, its importance cannot be over-estimated. It is a splendid centre in every way. The work of the London Missionary Society in the prefecture is even

now a truly great work, being carried on in six out of the seven districts or counties of which it consists. And I may add that up to the present time the London Missionary Society is the only Protestant Society that has ever had any work in the prefecture.

'The Sunday spent at Heng-Chow was a day never to be forgotten. A goodly number of Christians residing in the country round about Heng-Chow had heard of our arrival, and came in to see us. Others came in as candidates for baptism. We had two services, at both of which Mr. Sparham, Mr. Greig, and myself preached. At the close of the morning service twenty-eight persons were baptized, and at the close of the afternoon service nine more were added to their number. The morning congregation was a large one; the afternoon congregation was smaller, many of the Christians having had to leave for their distant homes in the country after the morning service.

'Among the baptized on this occasion there is one very remarkable woman. Some five or six years since, Mr. Peng was passing through a market town, about fifteen miles distant from Heng-Chow, called Chüan-hi-shih. There he made the acquaintance of a well-to-do family. Mr. Peng preached the Gospel to them, and both husband and wife became much interested in the truth. The husband, being an opium-smoker, has not taken an active part in propagating the Gospel, but the wife became at once an earnest propagandist. Having mastered to some extent the contents of the Christian books procured from Mr. Peng, she began to teach others. She turned part of her house into a

meeting-place, and invited the believers to come and join her in Christian worship. In this way about one hundred persons have been influenced by her, of whom nine or ten were baptized on this occasion. When asked to whom they were indebted for their knowledge of the truth, the answer invariably was, "We are indebted to Mrs. Wu for all we know." They spoke of her as their teacher, and of themselves as her scholars. This little band of Christians was put to a severe test during the persecutions of last year. They were all tried, but especially Mrs. Wu. Her house was destroyed, her business ruined, and all her property stolen. Mr. Peng estimates her loss at about 4000 dollars. She is now penniless. Her life was sought by the enemy, and for four months she wandered about from place to place in a state of abject poverty. Nevertheless her heart is full of gratitude, and her faith in God is as strong as ever. She told us that in the midst of her trials she cherished no hatred of her enemies, no ill-will, no desire for revenge. And all the other persecuted ones spoke in the same way. It was very interesting to listen to their tale of suffering, but still more interesting to learn that in the hour of trial they were able to manifest the Christian spirit so fully. The Christian Church in China can boast not only of heroes, but of heroines, among whom Mrs. Wu of Chüan-hi-shih must be regarded as occupying a foremost place. It would have been worth while going all the way to Heng-Chow if only to see this one woman and to listen to her story of trial and Christian heroism.

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'The one fact that stands out prominently in the foregoing narrative is this: *Hunan is open.* I have longed for many years to be able to pen that sentence of three words, but could not do so until now. Once and again have I said, during the past four years, that Hunan was opening, but never till now have I been able to say that it was actually open. Thank God, I can say so now, and my heart is full of gratitude and joy as I do say it.

'And now what are you going to do? We want two men for Chang-sha, two men for Siang-tan, and two men for Heng-Chow, at once. At Siang-tan we have a house in which two unmarried men, or a married couple, could live with comfort. At Heng-Chow we shall have a similar arrangement. All this is done by us with funds at our disposal, and we do not ask the Board for financial help so far as these two places are concerned. If we plant two men in Chang-sha, we shall want two or three thousand taels in order to provide them with a suitable house. I do not think there is room for hesitation on the part of the Directors. Chang-sha is a beautiful city, and the most important city in the province. It is the very heart of Hunan. It is also in the centre of our work. Siang-tan is only thirty miles from Chang-sha, and Heng-Chow is one hundred and thirty miles nearer Chang-sha than it is to Yo-Chow. Now that God has opened this magnificent city to us, in answer to the prayers and efforts of many years, let us take possession of it in His name for His sake, and let us do so at once.

'Again do I entreat you to send us men for Hunan.

If you cannot send eight, send six; if you cannot send six, send four; if you cannot send four, send two. Make a beginning anyhow. Chang-sha and Heng-Chow must be occupied at once.'

In December 1901 the irrepressible and persistent leader was in Hunan again. This time his journey was accomplished under conditions which would have made most men consider it their duty to turn back and nurse themselves. Soon after leaving Hankow he had an attack of dysentery and he was in pain and discomfort all the way, yet he persevered through a five weeks' trip. Writing from Hankow on January 8, 1902, he says:—

'At one time I hardly expected to see Hankow again. I am now on the mend, but feeling very weak. I look on this illness as a solemn warning. I have one great ambition, namely, to see my hopes with regard to the mission in Hunan and the educational scheme at Hankow realised before going hence. God, however, knows what is best, and my deepest prayer is, "Thy will be done."'

The special object of this trip was to arrange for the transfer of the headquarters of the Mission from Yo-Chow to Heng-Chow, the work having developed much more rapidly and extensively in and around the latter place.

'You know that our great work is in the Heng-Chow prefectures and two of the adjoining prefectures. We have in that region 5000 candidates for baptism at least. At Heng-Chow itself we have a beautiful congregation of Christians, and in the prefecture we

have between twenty and thirty more. Our work extends to the Canton province in the south and the Kwang-Si province on the west. It is a marvellous work. Mr. Greig in going to Heng-Chow is not going to create a new work, but to superintend and develop a work already created by Mr. Peng and his fellow-workers. At Yo-Chow there is hardly any work at all. So far it has turned out to be a barren field.'

The two missionaries removed to Heng-Chow in April 1902, the station at Yo-Chow being given up, and reoccupied after a short interval by the mission of the American Reformed Church. Since then Dr. John has had the joy of seeing missionaries of his own Society settled at Chang-sha and Siang-tan, and many other Christian workers have entered the great province. The China Inland Mission, not at all disheartened by the failure of its early and devoted pioneers, has pushed on with its usual zeal and energy, and is occupying several centres even in distant parts of the province. The American Presbyterian Mission, the American Reformed Church, the American Episcopal Church, the Wesleyan Missionary Society, the Christian Missionary Alliance, the Norwegian Mission, the American United Evangelical Mission, and other labourers are now sharing in the great opportunities afforded by the opening of Hunan.



CHAPTER XX

NEW MOVEMENTS AND THE OLD MISSIONARY

WE have anticipated somewhat the course of events in Dr. John's life and work, while completing the story of the opening of Hunan. It is scarcely necessary to narrate in any detail the course of his life and labours during the last fifteen years, because it would, on the whole, be only a repetition of what has been said of his earlier work. After suspending his labours as a translator of the Scriptures for some years, in deference to the arrangements made at the Shanghai Conference in 1890 for the preparation of Union Versions by committees appointed for the purpose, he resumed the work again when it became evident that many years must elapse before any Union Version could be ready. Since then he has steadily toiled, first at the completion of the Bible in Wen-li, and then the translation of the Old Testament into Mandarin. The Central China Tract Society has continued to enjoy his constant help. Notwithstanding the growing weight of years, he has maintained his power and a large amount of his energy as a preacher, and his letters show no abatement in his itinerating labours. Enough has already been said on these

subjects to show how tireless, strenuous, and many-sided a worker Dr. John has been throughout the whole of his missionary life. Some points stand out prominently in the course of the years, which it may be well briefly to occupy in turn.

The invitation sent to Dr. John to be one of the special representatives from the mission-field at the celebration of the centenary of the London Missionary Society in 1895 has already been mentioned; also his nomination a second time for election to the Chair of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1894. Much as he appreciated the honour which his friends sought to confer on him in connection with the Congregational Union, he did not feel at all prepared to accept it, and made known his feeling very clearly. He was, however, strongly tempted to pay a visit to England for the celebration of the Society's centenary. He was intensely interested in the forward movement which had been commenced in anticipation of the centenary, by which it was proposed to send out in four years one hundred additional missionaries to supply some of the many pressing needs in the mission-field. There are frequent references to the subject in his letters. The proposal was closely in accord alike with his own strong convictions of the greatness of the need, and with the spirit of confident faith which led him fearlessly to undertake any apparent duty or service, confident that God would supply every need of His servants if they sought to do His will. The following is a very characteristic expression of his feeling:—

'Will you kindly put my name down for £100 towards the Centenary Fund? I wish I could multiply this by ten, and make it more worthy of our noble Society and of this grand occasion. May the God who has watched over the Society in the past watch over it in the future, and may the second celebration be a celebration of a world conquered and won for Christ. A hundred years hence! I envy our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. We can only see in a vision the great things that will be seen in their day. But we do see and rejoice. I am thankful you have resolved to go on with the forward movement. I admire your faith, and pray every day that God will respond to it and honour it.

> The steps of faith
> Fall on the seeming void, and find
> The rock beneath.

May you find it to be so.'

He was kept in China by anxiety as to what might happen during the war between China and Japan, and then by the evidences of wide-spread renewal of the spirit of unrest and hostility to the foreigner, which found expression in the Kucheng massacres and the agitation throughout Sze-Chuen in 1895. His view of the situation and of his duty in relation to it is expressed in his correspondence very clearly, *e.g.* :—

'HANKOW, *December* 3, 1894.

'It looks as if the existing dynasty had reached its close; but there is no one who has the least chance of

succeeding in any attempt to become the founder of a new dynasty. Can the Empire hold together? Will it go to pieces? Will the great Powers divide it among themselves? These questions are being asked and discussed on every hand; but no one seems to have any light to throw on the subject.

'In view of all sorts of troubles that may arise, and of all sorts of possibilities that may spring up, I feel strongly that my right place is here; that it would not be right for me to leave my post. In the event of trouble, the converts would need me. My presence would be a great help to them in many ways. My colleagues would need me also. Should it be necessary that the married people should leave the place at any time, it would be necessary that I should be here to hold the fort and keep things going as long as possible. I have been here since '61; my interest in Hankow is greater than that of any one else; my experience is more extensive than that of any one else; the burden of China is on my heart these days, and I cannot shake it off. Then there are possibilities which may present themselves during the next year of infinite importance in connection with missionary work, and I want to be here to avail myself of them.'

'HANKOW, *September* 9, 1895.

'China's future! Who can say what it is to be? It looks to me sometimes as if it must break up and be divided between the more powerful of the Treaty Powers. There is no man in China to-day who can help China out of her misery. The Peking Govern-

ment is as weak as water, and the provincial Governments are utterly corrupt and incapable. Poor China! She is in a sad plight. And yet you have here a magnificent country and a great people, capable of the highest development. What they need is a good Government.'

'HANKOW, *September* 9, 1895.

'I think that the Kucheng tragedy will be the means of breaking up that dangerous society in that part of Fuh-Kien. It is called Vegetarian, but it is really a political society, and, like all these societies, has the subversion of the existing dynasty for its main aim.

'Here at Hankow and Wuchang there is a good deal of unhealthy excitement among the people. There are many bad characters in the place, and an uprising might take place at any time but for the vigilance of the authorities. Publications have been issued reciting the marvellous deeds of Liu Ying-fuh, the leader of the Black Flags in Formosa. He is fabled to have driven all the Japs out of Formosa, to have exterminated the foreign armies that had come to their aid, and to have sunk any number of English ships of war. As soon as Formosa is pacified, he will come to the mainland, drive all the foreigners into the sea, and restore to China the glorious days of Yau and Shun. This is the food on which the people of Hankow are feeding these weeks. They believe every word of it, and the casting out of the foreigners has become the talk of the tea-shops and the streets. I brought this matter before our Consul two or three weeks since. He at

once wrote to the Tau-tai, and got proclamations issued forbidding the talk and suppressing the literature. The books and prints disappeared at once, and matters have improved somewhat. But the place is full of all sorts of wild rumours. Our Viceroy, however, is awake, and doing all he can to keep things quiet. This being the case, I feel pretty sure that we shall have no serious trouble here. It is rumoured that we are to have an uprising early in the next month!'

It is rather remarkable that, at the very time when the spirit of suspicion and hostility to the foreigner was finding such disquieting expression in various quarters, a strong and wide-spread movement in favour of Christianity was going on in some of the country districts of Hupeh. Writing to the Foreign Secretary of the Society in July 1895, after referring to the Sze-Chuen troubles and the joy which had come to his heart in the reports of the steadfastness of the converts in that province, Dr. John went on:—

'Now for a bit of news that will cheer your heart. Last year I gave you some account of a remarkable work that had sprung up in the district of King-shan. I told you that I had baptized there on one Sunday 41 adults and 19 children, 60 in all. Mr. Hiung, one of the native assistants at Hankow, has just returned from a visit to King-shan. He tells us that all the converts baptized last year remain strong and firm in the faith. There are more than 190 now waiting for baptism, of whom about 100 are deemed *quite* satisfactory. The Christians have bought a large house for

chapel purposes, and paid for it themselves. About forty villages have become more or less Christian, and the work looks as if it might spread all over that part of the country.

'In the district of Tien-men there is a most interesting work springing up in the immediate vicinity of our station at Pah-tsze-nau. The place is called Peh-ho-kou, and I am told that from twenty-eight to thirty people are seeking baptism there. What they told Mr. Hiung was this: "We have given up idolatry. We do not believe in Roman Catholicism. We wish to be Christians, and desire to join the Gospel Church." The "Gospel Church" is our specific designation. I am sure you will join me in blessing God for this good news. When are you going to send us men for Ying-shan and Yun-mung on the one hand, and for Tien-men and King-shan on the other?'

Three years after, in an address to a missionary company at Kuling, Dr. John referred to this movement very fully and in a way which showed that he was not at all misled by the glamour of numbers and the excitement of a popular movement to make more of it than was wise, though he realised the serious responsibilities such a movement entailed on the missionaries:—

'It was in 1894 that I was, for the first time, brought face to face with this remarkable movement. In the beginning of that year our evangelist Wei Teh-sheng, who was then a colporteur, visited King-shan. As he was passing through the district he came into contact with a number of people who seemed wonder-

fully prepared for his message. They had lost all faith in idolatry, and professed to have no faith in Roman Catholicism. They gave up their idols to Mr. Wei, and begged him to stay with them and teach them. Having spent some weeks at the place, he returned to Hankow, and gave us a report of the work such as took us all by surprise. I had visited King-shan before, and we had had a few converts there for some years. But this was a new work, and quite different from the old in both spirit and character. Mr. Wei wanted us to visit the place at once, and see with our own eyes what God was doing in King-shan. We thought it best to wait, and give the movement time to develop and disclose its true nature. The fact is, we stood in doubt of it, and were slow to commit ourselves to it.

'It was not before October of the same year that Mr. Bonsey and myself visited the place. We took with us one of the most experienced and trustworthy of our native assistants at Hankow, in order to sift the movement to the bottom, and find out the real character of the candidates. On our arrival we were met by a large number of converts. They gave us a right royal reception, and would have killed us with kindness. Out of the multitude of candidates who came before us we baptized only forty-five adults. We might have baptized hundreds had we been less exacting. Both Mr. Bonsey and myself were surprised at the amount of knowledge the candidates possessed, and the evident sincerity which most of them evinced. The work in King-shan has been growing steadily during these four

years, and we have now in that one district several hundreds of baptized converts. Most of the Christians are respectable farmers and farm-labourers. A similar work is going on in the districts of Tien-men, Yun-mung, and Hiau-Kan. We have had a work in Yun-mung for many years; but till quite recently it was slow, heavy, and discouraging. About three years ago it began to show signs of a new life, and now our chapel, which holds nearly 200 people, is too small for the congregation. In Hiau-Kan we have had a good work for more than twenty years. The progress there has been steady and substantial from the beginning; but of late there has been a wonderful revival. On a recent visit I baptized in the Hiau-Kan district 166 persons, of whom 131 were adult believers.

'Thus the fire has been spreading during these four years in a wonderful manner, and, so far as I can see at the present time, is destined to spread. The movement took me by surprise. Though I had been in China forty years I found myself unprepared for it. I could hardly believe in its reality. It seemed too good to be true. And yet this is what I had been praying for ever since I came to China.

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'I would divide the candidates with whom I have had to deal in connection with this movement into three classes: those who are actuated by good and pure motives wholly; those who are actuated by bad and false motives wholly; and those who are actuated by mixed motives—motives not bad themselves, still not exclusively religious and spiritual. All the candi-

dates with whom I have had anything to do belong to one or the other of these three classes. Those who are actuated by good and pure motives solely are easily dealt with; but they are not, I fear, very numerous. Neither is it difficult to deal with those who are actuated by bad motives solely, for if the missionary is straight in his dealings with them, they will soon fall off of their own accord. The great mass of candidates are to be found among the third class, or those who are influenced by mixed motives, and they are not so easily disposed of.

'In what light shall we regard these men? How shall we deal with them? Shall we look upon them as so many hypocrites, and dismiss them on account of the imperfection of the motive by which they are actuated? Some would say *yes*. I say *no*, a thousand times *no*. I would say: "Take them by the hand, pour more light into their souls, and lead them on to higher and nobler things." Do this, and in many cases the lower motive will die down, and the higher motive will grow in strength and become dominant. Out of that mass of candidates, not very satisfactory perhaps at the outset, you will get some of your brightest converts, and most valuable helpers in the work. Such has been my experience. Some of the best men we have in Central China are men who were in the first instance actuated by *mixed* motives. And there is nothing strange in this. The Apostles were actuated by very mixed motives right up to the time of the crucifixion. Who shall be the greatest in the kingdom?—that was one of their

grand ambitions. And yet our Lord did not reject them on this account. He bore with them, and patiently led them onward and upward. When the Holy Ghost came down upon them at Pentecost, the low motive was burned up, and the higher motive became regnant in their hearts and lives. So will it be with these imperfect converts, at least with many of them, if we adopt the method of Christ in dealing with them.'

It is not surprising that under conditions such as these the old spirit of appeal for advance should have burned up very strongly, and that he wrote to the Directors of the Society in August 1896 in the following terms:—

'I do most earnestly plead with the Directors on behalf of the Mission in Central China. Did I not believe in God, I should feel inclined to despair utterly as I think of the claims of the work and your inability to meet them. I can only throw myself on God's mercy and ask His forgiveness if I do sometimes allow myself to yield to unworthy despondency. I am getting to be an old man; the men on whom I have been building my hopes for the future are being taken away; and the work is spreading rapidly in every direction around us. There are hundreds in the counties of Tien-men and King-shan asking for baptism; the next time I go there I shall baptize, in all probability, from 200 to 300 persons, the interest in the truth is wide-spread in the whole of that region; and yet I am told that you can do nothing to help on the work there. You have been praying

for results. God is giving you results; but your only reply to the call for gratitude is an emphatic *non possumus*. I do not find fault; but I do feel sad and sorrowful. I feel that we are bound to go on and daily enlarge our boundaries. We dare not go back, we cannot stand still; that would be suicidal. God is marching on, and we are bound to follow. Can you do *nothing* to help us? Are we to understand that King-shan and Tien-men are not to be manned by you? Would you advise us to hand these two counties over to another mission?'

The Directors of the Society could not resist such an appeal as this, though the finances of the Society were, as usual, in a condition which made advance almost impossible. A clerical missionary was appointed; a new station was commenced at Tsao Shih; whilst two generous friends undertook the support of a medical missionary and provided the funds required for the erection of a hospital.

The strain of incessant work, with constant anxiety, was steadily telling on the strong frame of the veteran leader, and he had more than one serious warning that he could not go on as he had been accustomed to do. In 1893 he had a very serious illness, during which at one time his life seemed to be trembling in the balance. In succeeding years the trouble recurred again and again. He was also greatly depressed by sickness and death in the Mission. In 1894 Mr. Walford Hart was suddenly stricken down very shortly after his marriage, and his young widow followed him a year later. Mrs. William Owen, a worker of ripe experience

and great power, died in 1895. The year 1896 was a very sickly one in Central China; death visited the Wesleyan and also the London Missions, and amidst the joy of a rapidly extending work came great sorrow. Writing to Mr. Bryson in August 1896, Dr. John said:—

'I am getting to feel more and more that earth is growing poorer and heaven richer. I don't know how you feel. I hope you do not feel exactly as I do, for you are younger, and the end in your case is not so near.

'This year has been a very fatal one at Hankow and the vicinity: David Hill gone, Turner gone, Terrell gone, and others gone. Gillison had to go to Japan in quest of health at the beginning of the summer, and Hodge has had to follow. I broke down about six weeks ago, and had to fly to Kuling. Had Kuling been ready, it would have been the very place for Gillison and Hodge. The Archibalds gave me a pressing invitation to come and take a room in their bungalow; but there was not a hole or a corner for Gillison or Hodge on the estate.

'Turner was a most promising young fellow, and would have developed into a fine missionary. As to Terrell, he was a splendid missionary. I loved and admired him for his character and worth very greatly. He was a robust Christian, a most enthusiastic missionary, and a genuinely manly man. He was just made for Hiau-Kan and the country work of that region. He was to me a son, and I loved him as a father. His death is a great loss to our Mission in

Central China; to Hiau-Kan it is irreparable. *You* would have liked Terrell—a man full of life, health, and vigour, a man of great singleness of purpose and wonderful devotion to Christ. Why should such a man be taken away from such a work in the midst of his days and usefulness? That is a question I cannot answer with any satisfaction to my own mind. God cannot make a mistake. He is love; He is light. The work is His, and nearer to His heart than it can be to mine. He must mean some great good to the work in taking such a man from it. "What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." "It is expedient for you that I go away." We can only rest in God Himself. I thank God every day for the faith He has given me in *Himself*, apart from all His outward dealings with me.'

Fortunately, just at this time it became possible to obtain summer quarters on the lofty mountains to the south of the Yang-tse. For many years this had been greatly desired by the missionary circle and other foreign residents in Hankow and other parts of the Yang-tse valley, where the summer heat is intense, steamy, and unhealthy; but every effort to find a suitable place, or, finding it, to get a settlement there, had been in vain. The story of the acquisition of Kuling and of its subsequent extension is a most interesting illustration of Chinese official methods of obstruction, which were only overcome by long years of patient pressure on the part of a small committee, of which Dr. John was from the first the chairman, and in the efforts of which he took a very active part. The result

of their labours was the acquisition by purchase from the Government, first of a piece of land, and then, after negotiations extending to 1904, of a considerable extension in 'a beautiful, well-watered mountain valley, with an elevation of 4000 feet, on the top of the Lu mountain, close to the port of Kiu-kiang, convenient of access from all parts of Central China. In ancient times it had been covered with temples, but these had all long been destroyed, and the whole mountain top abandoned to the wild beasts. No one owned it, no one lived there, and the officials seemed to be ignorant of its very existence.'

At first a small colony of missionaries established themselves there for summer quarters; but every year has seen an increasing number of houses and visitors from the commercial and official communities of Shanghai and other more distant places. Fully 1200 Europeans now find a resting-place there during the heat, and have cause to thank the three enterprising and persistent missionaries whose efforts have secured for them this great boon. 'The number of sick folk who have been restored to health through its pure, cool, and bracing air can no longer be counted, while not a few amongst them declare they owe their lives to Kuling. Only residents on the broiling plains of the Far East can appreciate the boon it is.' Dr. John found the benefit from the outset, and, humanly speaking, the continuance of his life and power of work during recent years has been largely due to the effects of the annual change to Kuling. In 1897 he wrote to his old friend Mr. Jacob from Kuling:—

'I was here last year for about six weeks on account of a break-down. In May of this year I had a similar break-down, so the doctor ordered me up here for the summer. I left Hankow in the beginning of June, accompanied by Mary and Gito, and here I am likely to be to the end of August. I have already derived much benefit from the change, and am expecting to derive more. In any case, the change has saved me from the heat of Hankow, which is very intense in the months of July and August. During my forty-two years in China I have had hardly any holiday life. Last year and this have been the only years in which I have taken any holiday whatever, and in both years I have been driven away by illness. It is not all re-creation, however, for I am working at Revelations some five or six hours every day. I am turning the Psalms into Mandarin, and I hope to take both the Psalms and Proverbs with me to Hankow when I return.'

Significant indications have not been wanting for many years that there was a party in China, small perhaps, but growing, who were not disposed to lose the benefit of the mechanical superiority of Western nations by clinging to their own antiquated methods. There have also been a small number of Chinese who have received Western education and have learned the value of it. The disastrous war with Japan in 1894 was a very forcible and convincing object-lesson in this direction. Their small neighbour, who had opened her doors to European education, and had remodelled large sections of her national life under Western influence,

was able with the greatest ease to defeat their armies, sink or capture their men-of-war, annex Formosa, set Korea free from Chinese suzerainty, and make China realise her utter impotence. The party of advance and the movement of reform made rapid progress after this experience.

This changed feeling showed itself in a new attitude towards Western education, and a new desire to learn something of Christianity. Dr. John mentions in his report for 1897 that even in the Chinese examination halls questions were being put which only those who had some acquaintance with the Bible could answer, and states that at the examination in Nan-chang, the capital of Kiang-Si, the candidates were asked, 'What do you know of the repeopling of the world by Noah and his family after the flood?' The text-book recommended to the students was the Old Testament!

Again, writing to the Rev. G. Cousins in January 1898, he says:—

'There is one point, however, on which I did not touch in my last letter, namely, the adoption of English as part of the scheme. There was a time when I was strongly opposed to the introduction of this element into our schools; but the times have altered, and my own views have undergone a complete change. There is in China at the present time a great demand for English, and the demand will have to be met. The Chinese will have English, no matter what the missionaries may do. Shall the demand be met by the Christian missionary, and the teaching be made subservient to the Christianisation of the nation; or shall

it be met by men who are out of all sympathy with missions, and thus the teaching be made subservient to the diffusion of anti-Christian principles throughout the land? That is a question which presses itself on my mind, and to which I find it impossible to give but one answer. Then English teaching will bring hundreds of men of high social standing under our influence, with most of whom we should find it impossible to come into contact in any other way. Moreover, the mission that will ignore this element will find it impossible in the days to come to compete with the more progressive ones. There is a tremendous change coming over China, and the missions must adapt themselves to the new order of things, or fall behind; and this the London Mission must do if it would maintain its rightful position among the organisations that are now seeking to promote the intellectual, moral, and spiritual elevation of this great people. Forward!!'

That year, 1898, was one of startling and momentous changes in China. The party of progress obtained for a time the ascendency in the Imperial councils, and the young Emperor propounded a very radical and sweeping scheme of reform. The movement was, however, too sudden, the change proposed was too violent, and the forces of conservatism were aroused in alarm and self-defence. The young Emperor was practically dethroned, his aunt, the Dowager Empress, assuming again the reins of government. Some of the most prominent reformers were seized and executed, and others had to flee for their lives. The Boxer rising of 1900 may not have been actually instigated by the reactionary



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leaders in Peking, but it unquestionably was encouraged and spread by official approval. If it could have succeeded, it would have meant not only the expulsion of the foreigner from China and the crushing for the time of the Christian Church, but also the complete and perhaps prolonged triumph of the anti-reform and unprogressive party in China.

In Central China the Viceroy of Hupeh, Chang Chih-tung, by his enlightened policy and by his firmness, was mainly instrumental in preventing any serious outbreak against foreigners and native Christians. The ladies and children were ordered from Hankow and other places in the interior to the coast, and many mission stations were, as a wise precaution, entirely deserted by their occupants for several months. The majority of the missionaries in the interior of Northern and Western China who escaped from the fury of the Boxers found their way to safety through Central China and down the Yang-tse valley by way of Hankow. The letters from that mission are full of a pathetic and tragic interest as they tell of the condition of those who in succession arrived. The following letter from Dr. John, dated August 27, 1900, describes some of the perils even in Hankow, and refers to the sorrowful travellers who were passing through from the interior :—

'Missionaries are arriving here almost every day, on their way from the interior to the coast. The tale which some of them have to tell is enough to make one's blood run cold. I have never heard anything so gruesome as the story of the suffering and barbarism which the Shan-Si refugees have brought with them.

Others also have sad tales to tell; but this is the saddest I have heard. There are tales that have not reached us yet, which will surpass this in horror. The Pao-ting-fu tale when told will throw every other into the shade. I am looking forward to it with absolute dread, as I do to that of Tai-yuen-fu. The missionaries from Shan-Si and Honan have, almost without an exception, passed through great sufferings. Those from Shen-Si and Sze-Chuen have not been called to pass through any trials arising from ill-treatment on the part of the officials or people.

'We cannot but feel thankful to God for the peace we have been permitted to enjoy at Hankow and Wuchang. We have had our trials here. The rumours have been many, constant, and very alarming. We have been also in great perils. Last week, for instance, we were in great danger, owing to the plottings of the reformers. They had entered into collusion with the Kolao sect and the vilest vagabonds of the place, with the view of killing the officials, from the Viceroy downwards, and taking possession of these three cities. But for the vigilance and energy of the Viceroy, these three cities would have been in ashes before the end of last week. I have always had great confidence in the good intentions of our Viceroy, and this has enabled me to go on with my work here in the enjoyment of much mental peace.

'You will be pleased to learn that here at the centre, and in all the surrounding counties occupied by the Society, there has been no suspension of work. Christians have been meeting for worship as usual, the

healing work at the Hankow hospital has been going on as heretofore, and our day schools have never been closed. Till a fortnight ago the daily preaching was carried on regularly, and with as much energy as ever After the attacks made on the chapels by the mob, the officials suggested that it would be advisable to suspend this branch of the work for the present. We thought it only right to meet their wishes in this matter, so there has been no daily preaching for about a fortnight.

'I am sure we have acted wisely in staying here to comfort and strengthen our native brethren. It would have been cruel to leave them whilst there was a possibility of staying with them. Had I left them when these troubles began, I could never return and preach faith and courage to them again. Our presence here has been most helpful to them in many ways. I think you will say that we have acted rightly and wisely in the way we have distributed our forces. The ladies and children are safe in Japan. Some of the gentlemen are there also, but most of us are here. I trust the day is not far distant when we shall all be gathered together at this centre again.

'My impression is that such will be the case, and hence the reason why I have been advising the missionaries not to go far away from their stations, so that they may return to their work at the earliest opportunity. "Go to Japan; don't go home; you will, I hope, soon be wanted again." That has been my advice to most of my brethren of various missions. It will be some time before the missionaries can return

to the more remote places in the interior; but my hope is, and belief also, that they will soon be able to resume work at the ports and places in the vicinity of the ports.

'I do not take a desponding view of the future, but the reverse. There are glorious days for missions in China right before us. I am surprised to hear that people are talking about giving up the work in China; they must be mad, surely. Our prospects to-day in China are vastly brighter than they were six months ago. I was beginning to despond at that time; I do not despond now. My heart is full of hope, full of eager expectation. The demand for missionaries will be greater than ever; the demand for the Bible and other Christian books will be greater than ever; the demand for Western education will be greater than ever. The Chinese mind will be better prepared for the truth of the Gospel and truth of every kind than it has ever been in all the past. All these sufferings through which the Church is passing in China these days are terrible to think of; but we shall find that they have a place in God's plan. There is a *needs be* for these pains and trials. Don't despair about China. You mention Hunan. Don't despair about Hunan; Hunan will soon be all right. The only question that troubles me when I think of China generally, and Hunan specially, is this: Will the Church of God be prepared for the magnificent opportunities which the new order of things in this land is about to present to it? China will be ready for you; will you be ready for China? The doors of Hunan will be open as they

never were before; will you be prepared to enter in? Will you still grudge ten men for that magnificent province? May God prepare all the Societies for the China that He, in His own mysterious way, is preparing for them.'

Dr. John's long experience and sound judgment made him a valuable counsellor to H.M. Consul in the very anxious and responsible position in which he was placed; and he was a tower of strength to the native Christians. His reference to his experience is characteristic:—

'During these three months converts used to come in batches, and fill my study from the early morning down into the depths of the night. They came for comfort, guidance, and help in many ways. They had wonderful tales to tell of their trials, their sufferings, and fears. Their anxiety reached its highest pitch when the ladies were ordered away by the Consul-General and the missionaries began to take their departure. It was a sad time for them, and it was a trying time to ourselves. But I shall never cease to thank God for the privilege of being here at the time. I would not have missed it for much gold. The mental peace which God gave me right through is an experience never to be forgotten. Then there was a wonderful deepening of my interest in the Christians, and an intensifying of my interest in the work itself. The Christians did not rise above fear, and we can pardon them for that. But they did rise above cowardice. Many efforts were made to get them to recant; but, so far as I know, not a man among them,

nor a woman either, proved unfaithful. Their confession of Christ was bold and uncompromising. One old woman faced the tempter and said: "You can kill me if you like, but I will never forsake Christ; I have only one life to live, I can only die once. Kill me if you like, my mind is made up." That was the front which our converts presented to the enemy during those months of trial. None of our converts in Hupeh were called upon to die for Christ, but many of them would have died cheerfully rather than deny their faith in Him. Of this I have no doubt whatever.'

As soon as peace was restored, the progressive spirit in China began to reassert itself. In his report for the year 1901, Dr. John called attention to 'three remarkable Imperial decrees on education which have recently been issued, and which have very powerfully affected public opinion. The first of these decrees was that abolishing in all public examinations the "Wen Chang," or Chinese essay, and substituting for it essays and articles on modern subjects. This was followed by another requiring all colleges to be turned into schools of Western learning. Every county is to have a primary school, every prefecture is to have a second grade school, and every provincial capital is to have a college. In all these Western as well as Chinese subjects are to be taught. Finally, viceroys and governors are commanded to select young men of marked ability and to send them abroad to study. Such edicts as these may not be sufficient evidence of any real and permanent change of feeling towards foreigners, but they express the present views of the rulers, and,

as a natural result, they greatly stimulate the desire for Western knowledge.'

The awakening of China has continued, and the demand for education on Western lines has become very general. Japanese influence since the remarkable success of that country in the recent war with Russia has by no means lessened this desire, though at present it is stimulating a new national feeling which threatens to become quite as anti-foreign as the feeling of the old conservatism.

It is scarcely necessary to repeat that to all Christian missions in China the awakening which has come in recent years is a new opportunity of unique importance, and hence is a very great responsibility. The people for whose special enlightenment they have so long been labouring, often in spite of determined opposition and persecution, have not been blind to their efforts on their behalf, and in the hour of their new need have turned first to the missionaries for help.

In view of the attacks made on missionaries by European writers during the Boxer rising as the cause of all the troubles between China and the nations of the West, and as the class who were distrusted and disliked by the Chinese more than any other foreigners, it is extremely suggestive that every high school and college opened by missionaries is crowded with paying pupils, and that missionaries are being largely looked to for guidance and help in the Government scheme for the establishment of national universities in each of the eighteen provinces!

In 1897 the Hankow Mission, of which Dr. John

was the head, entered upon a new educational scheme, to meet the new needs which were beginning to be felt, and to provide for the growing wants of the large Christian community which was springing up in the districts around. The scheme provided for boys' schools, a girls' boarding-school, a high school, a normal school, and a theological college; subsequently a medical school was added to it. Dr. John in this, as in many other things, gave evidence of the youthfulness and freshness of his spirit. He had been for more than forty years a great evangelist and had urged upon all his colleagues and upon other workers that preaching the Message of Life was the great means by which they might best win China. As soon, however, as he recognised the changed conditions and the new opportunities, he threw himself heartily into the new schemes of education, and has rejoiced as heartily as any in their progress and success.

In February 1899 he wrote to the Foreign Secretary of the Society to say that in two months the educational scheme of the Mission would be in full swing, and he proceeded:—

'As to the future, I feel pretty sure that there are great developments awaiting us in the very near future. I am not at all cast down by the *coup* in Peking. The reform movement must go on, and I am not sure but that the Empress herself will eventually head it. Indeed, I have been expressing this opinion for weeks. One thing is certain, China cannot go back. If we could only maintain the "open door" policy, we should have everything to hope for and nothing to



Photo] [*Bernard Upward.*

MEMBERS OF THE LONDON MISSION, HANKOW, 1906.

(*From a photograph taken on the occasion of the farewell to Dr. John and the Rev. C. G. Sparham, April* 11, 1906.)



fear, so far as the Protestant missions are concerned.

'As to my coming home, I have not fully made up my mind not to come. My dreams—the dreams of years—are being fulfilled one by one. My dream of seeing a strong mission in Central China is fulfilled. My dream of carrying the Gospel from Hankow through Hunan to the borders of Canton has been fulfilled. My dream of seeing an educational institution established in connection with our Mission in Central China has been fulfilled. In three years hence the Hunan Mission will be on its feet, and so will the educational institution; and I shall be seventy years of age then. It strikes me that I might come home then with a *good conscience*. Don't you think so yourself? It would be a great delight to see you and many more of the friends that are still left. It will be sad, however, to miss so many faces. Some of my best and dearest friends are gone, and I shall miss them sadly if I ever go home again. But all is uncertain, except the glorious assurance we have of meeting in the presence of our blessed Lord and Master.'

A large Chinese house was purchased to provide temporary quarters for the boarding and high school, and, as already mentioned, Dr. John himself erected and gave to the Mission a handsome building well adapted for a theological school. It is now proposed to erect permanent and suitable buildings for the high school, medical school, and enlarged women's hospital, as a memorial of Dr. John's life and splendid service.

When the new theological college was opened in 1904 Dr. John expressed his views on mission work very clearly. He said, as reported in the *North China Daily News*:—

'He was afraid his attitude with respect to education had sometimes been misunderstood. People spoke to him as if he had been an enemy who had somehow got converted, and wanted to know how it was done. The simple truth was that in his methods of mission work he believed he had always been divinely led. At the beginning he saw that the great need was for evangelistic effort. He wanted to see strong churches and many of them, so it became his whole ambition, whether by tongue or pen, to make the hills and valleys of Central China resound with the music of the Cross. He worked for this, and tried to get all others to work for it. He gloried in the fact, and were he beginning afresh he would do the same again. He was no enemy of education, but thought it should be left to the few. He sympathised with schools and hospitals and every department of Christian effort, but for the great mass of missionaries he would say, "Let them evangelise." There was no better work. Ten years ago the increasing number of converts, and the changing aspect of the times, led him to think the education question must now be faced. A scheme was formulated, and in 1899 the high school was opened, and the divinity school in the same year. Then followed the normal school and the medical school. With regard to all of them he was enthusiastic, and yet bated not a jot of his evangelistic fervour. It was

because he was an evangelist first that he had now become an educationalist.'

Dr. John completed his jubilee of missionary service on Sunday, September 24, 1905. 'His eye was not dim, neither was his natural force abated.' Endowed with a fine constitution, a physical frame capable of enduring an exceptional amount of fatigue and strain, an active and tireless brain of no common order, and a heart aflame with love to his Divine Master and to the Chinese, he might well be described as the 'Grand Old Man' of Central China.

The occasion of his jubilee was made the opportunity of a great demonstration of affection and honour in which missionary friends of many missions and Chinese Christians from far and near took part. In addition to the large number of letters expressing the congratulations of absent friends, and the speeches and addresses of those who were present, expression was given in permanent form of the love and trust of his colleagues past and present, and also of the strong feeling of gratitude for all his services cherished by the Chinese Christians. One who was present at the meeting says:—

'As we listened there seemed to be two key-words constantly recurring as each paid the tribute of respect —*friendship* and *persistence.* When the Rev. Arnold Foster had read the address presented by his colleagues, and Dr. John replied, these two characteristics came out again and again: "I love my work, I love my colleagues; and as I have begun so I follow on as long as life shall last." This was the warp on which

Dr. John seemed to weave his address. Here are a few of his thoughts spoken from a full heart :—

'"A missionary life is the greatest of all possible lives." "If a messenger from God should come and tell me my life was to be spared for another fifty years, *China should have them all.*" "That Inner Voice—I have always obeyed it, and it has never failed me. Even when, in earlier days, going into Hunan with my life in my hands, I knew no fear—return alive or not, I knew this was the will of God for me."

'The speaker told us of his youthful ambition to be a popular Welsh preacher, and how the missionary desire had entered in and driven out that ambition. In a glowing tribute to his colleagues he said :—

'"My colleagues—I love them. Never man had such colleagues as I have. This great work in Central China is not the work of *one* man ; all my colleagues have had a share in it. The work is theirs as much as mine, and all the glory is God's.

'"I learned a great secret many years ago :—Never judge a man by what he says, or even by what he may do. Judge a man by *what he is*, what I know him to be.

'"Love—love—love—this is the secret of a happy co-operation."

'There cannot be a better way of bringing this article to a close than by giving Dr. John's pronouncement on optimism :—"Some seem to imagine I am an optimist because life has been easy and I have never known trial or sorrow. But I tell you I am an optimist because of what I see—the changes that have

taken place these fifty years. Sorrow! loss! I have known the bitterest—wife, children—I have gone through it all. Disappointments, dangers—many! But I am an optimist in spite of it all."'

The Chinese Christians decided that they would have a special demonstration a few weeks later in addition to that held at the actual date of the jubilee. An enormous pavilion was erected, in which about two thousand people assembled and held a meeting of thanksgiving to God and congratulations to Dr. John.

'Just over Dr. John's head was suspended the Chinese ideograph for "love," made of white chrysanthemums; and indeed the key-note of the afternoon was "love." "He has loved us" came again and again from the lips of the speakers. It is something to have taught this great lesson, even though fifty years be spent in the teaching.

'After the service came the reception of delegates—a long, long string of them—filing past the Doctor, bowing, and voicing the congratulations of their various churches. From *thirty-one counties* in Hupeh and Hunan came a delegate or a congratulatory letter. Such is the vast extent of the Central China Mission's field! It was one of the most moving sights of the jubilee celebrations, native or foreign.

'Then—most significant fact—just before Dr. John delivered a telling speech, came deputations of school children, boys and girls (remember it was in China), with their floral offerings and good wishes to the man who had begun the great work that was setting them free.'

Since this happy meeting the great missionary has

had a serious break-down in health, and has been compelled for a time to quit the scene of his labours and find rest with his sons in the United States. Yet such is his extraordinary vitality that already physicians say that he may probably be spared to labour quietly for eight or ten years longer in the land of his adoption.

If the story of the life and labours of Dr. John has been fairly told, some of his most marked characteristics cannot fail to have been noted. His clear and strong intellectual grasp of truth, his whole-souled devotion to the service of his Lord and Master, his splendid and inspiring optimism, his tireless persistence in whatever he has set his hand to, his practical wisdom as a counsellor, his rich endowments as a preacher and writer, and his personal charm of character, have increasingly distinguished him from the rank and file of workers, and marked him out as a great man and a great leader of men. He believes and thinks the best about men, and so gets the best out of them.

Many friends have been anxious to express their feeling about the "Father of the Central China Mission," and pages might be filled with these tributes of affection and esteem. It would, however, be distasteful to Dr. John and altogether unbecoming during his lifetime to give full expression to the thoughts concerning him which affection suggests, or to attempt any detailed estimate of his personal character. Long may it be before the opportunity will present itself for adding such a final chapter to his biography.

THE END



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